3 1223 00086 0818

BOOK NO.	ACCESSION
B St28m	296537

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
VITA SINE LITERIS MORS EST

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/myhouseichronicl0000mary

MARY ELIZA STARBUCK
Painted by Elizabeth Coffin about 1895

MY HOUSE AND I

A Chronicle of Nantucket

By
MARY ELIZA STARBUCK

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1929

COPYRIGHT, 1929, BY MARY E. STARBUCK

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO REPRODUCE
THIS BOOK OR PARTS THEREOF IN ANY FORM

B
St 28 m

296537

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

To those who know the little path, the apple-tree and the Isabella grapevine, and who have watched with me the shadows lengthening on the grass, I dedicate these flecks of sunshine and drops of rain from the days that are no more.

CONTENTS

I.	My House and I	1
II.	Father	19
III.	First Schools and Our Susan	52
IV.	Childhood	75
V.	The Thousand-Year Box	93
VI.	Æsthetic Gropings	108
VII.	Early Years and Later Schools	116
VIII.	Wrecks	149
IX.	Pleasant Street and Some Changes	161
X.	Freeze-ups	176
XI.	The Civil War	188
XII.	Other Nantucket Days	206
XIII.	My House	221
XIV.	Some of Us	245
XV.	With Passing Years	266
XVI.	Latter Days	287

ILLUSTRATIONS

MARY ELIZA STARBUCK — *Frontispiece*

MY HOUSE — 2

FATHER — 20

A LETTER ORDERING A SLED FROM THE PACIFIC OCEAN — 38

MARY STARBUCK AT FIVE — 54

MOTHER AND BROTHER — 54

HON. WALTER FOLGER — 94
From a painting

ELMA'S FATHER — 94
From a portrait by Eastman Johnson

HEPSIBETH HUSSEY — 140
Photograph by Henry Wyer

UNDER THE ISABELLA GRAPEVINE — 242

CALM ON THE HARBOR — 292
Photograph by Henry Wyer

MY HOUSE AND I

CHAPTER I

MY HOUSE AND I

It is a disappointment to the more sentimental among the newcomers brought or sent to me by my friends that I was not born in my house.

There is, however, some alleviation in the fact that my house and I came into the family in the same year; that I have had no other home on Nantucket; that we have watched and cared for each other through all the years, understanding each other's needs and even moods, with perfect sympathy.

Once, even, the material of our make-up was a disappointment. It was while one of the biennial Main Street Fêtes was being held that a man was presented to me, and as my friends left us together he began to talk about my beautiful house and the wonderful antique furniture that he had just seen. I said that he was making a mistake. It wasn't my house. That was difficult apparently for him to accept. 'Why then had he been introduced to me?' seemed to be written upon his face. So I hastened to comfort him by telling

him that my house, though built of wood, was more or less interesting, the frame being of Nantucket oak. That did not interest *him*. He became restless. I tried again with 'Walter Folger and the wonderful clock.' No, if I didn't own that brick house, he was losing time. He wanted to get away. I saw it plainly, and at last said rather wheedlingly, 'But you know, I'm ever so much nicer than a brick house!' That was quite too much; with resentment in every motion he turned his back and marched off.

I had had such a good time that I sought out my friends and told them about it. Their sense of humor was not highly developed and they thought that I was entering a complaint. So they said soothingly, 'Oh, well, we don't know him very well, anyway; we thought that he might like to meet you because of your name. He is not a person of discrimination.' 'Oh, but he is!' I replied; 'only he discriminates in favor of brick!'

But we have our friends, my house and I, even our lovers.

I was born on Nantucket in my grandmother Starbuck's house in Starbuck's Court, and I was six months old when Father sailed in the Islander, for a five years' whaling voyage in the Pacific.

Whaling was already on its decline. Nantucket was no longer leading the world in this in-

MY HOUSE

dustry. The Great Fire of '46, the discovery of gold in California, and the introduction of petroleum for illuminating purposes — these three blows in ten years, had sealed the fate of Nantucket, threatened already by the forging ahead of Salem and New Bedford. But the end had not yet come. Ships still sailed out from Nantucket, away into the unknown; money was generously and fearlessly invested, and the great gamble was still the Island's one prevailing interest and occupation.

I have always understood that the Islander was built for Father by another branch of Starbucks who were shipowners, having inherited money from one of the many brothers of my great-grandfather. This man had been able to accumulate a small capital, had invested in ships, and had won out. In any case the Islander was a Starbuck ship. And I have been told that our handsome father was a great favorite with the owners, a strong man, well educated for those times, and not only an able captain, but a successful one — and that is a different matter.

My mother was from Martha's Vineyard, and I suppose that it was soon after Father sailed that Mother took her two children — my brother was five years older than I — back 'home' to Edgartown, and it was there that my memories begin.

And the first is not a happy one. I couldn't

have been much more than three years old when I remember playing with some rather older children — I suppose they were my cousins — in the attic of an unfinished house. Happening to glance out of the low window, I saw some one with a shawl, of a pattern that I recognized as my mother's, just disappearing around the corner of the street that I knew led to the place where people said 'good-bye,' and then stayed forlornly watching boats that took their friends away. How I knew this I cannot tell. But my mother was going away — she was already gone, and I was left behind, alone. I was alone in the universe, in space, in eternity. Of course I did not formulate all this. It is only a later description of what I know that I felt. I was not exactly afraid. That is too definite a sensation, and too limited, even. I was desolate; I was one unbearable consciousness of desolation. It was a grown-up feeling — I know it; I've had it since, more than once.

It must have been instinct that led me home. I had no thought of pursuit. She had gone away, my mother.

I remember nothing between that unbearable sense of loneliness, and the comfort of finding myself in my mother's arms, being rocked and cuddled, and *safe*, while between-times she talked with a stranger whom afterwards I learned to call 'Uncle Callao,' because that was

where he lived. He was a cousin of my father's, and had lately arrived from the 'West Coast' for a visit home in Nantucket.

A good many Nantucketers at that time had established themselves in business at the various important ports from Payta to Valparaiso. Those already married usually came back in time, either to or with their families, but some of the younger men married Spanish wives and always lived in South America. They kept in touch with the people in the old home by occasional visits, and especially through the ships, the whalers that hailed from Nantucket, or from the Vineyard. I remember a very attractive young Spanish wife who came to Nantucket with her husband when I was a little girl; and, happily much later on, the brilliant youth, Fernando, who came to visit his Nantucket cousins. The 'West Coast' was as definite a place in our minds as Massachusetts, and Valparaiso as familiar as Boston.

At first I did not particularly care for Uncle Callao, in spite of Mother's saying, 'Callao is said to be the best dancer on the West Coast.' That did not interest me. I was too young for dancing. Moreover, Uncle Callao was not very good-looking, and my appreciation of beauty was developed very early in my consciousness. And another prolific source of suffering with which I began life was an almost ungovernable

fastidiousness. I had also a strong sense of my personal dignity. This last, however, is, I think, far more common in children than their elders sometimes realize, and accounts for much 'contrariness.' I even disliked Uncle Callao later on.

One day I was playing in Grandfather's yard, for we were living with him. There was a big black dog that I don't think belonged to us; I seem to remember him only on that day. I can, however, plainly see the sunshine flecking the grass under the apple tree, and the big black dog, and the fair-haired child in a blue gown, of some soft material like cashmere, and Mother coming out on the porch and calling me in to see Uncle Callao, who had completed his business and was going to Nantucket that day.

I went in rather reluctantly, and Mother explained that after a little time Uncle Callao was going back to the West Coast and would like to take me away with him 'to-day.' She asked me gravely if I would like to go.

I would *not!* And what was more, I was indignant — if I had only known the word — that this stranger should for one minute think that I would go away with him. And I was also indignant and somewhat hurt that my mother should dream of such a possibility.

The sight of my new bonnet which Mother whimsically produced as a bribe, since it had just arrived — a lovely creation, from my only aunt

— simply added to my scorn of the whole absurd situation. I don't remember how the scene ended, but I think that my attitude and my preferences must have been made quite clear.

It is only fair to record that when Uncle Callao was back in New England for the latter part of his life, and I as a grown woman learned to know him, we became good friends, in spite of the fact that his early admiration for me had suffered no abatement as the years went by, and was prone to express itself in fluent English of a highly complimentary nature.

My last memory of Uncle Callao was one evening when I came home, bringing with me a distant cousin of Nantucket ancestry, and we found Mother and Uncle Callao, both far along in the seventies, sitting with only the moonlight for illumination, talking over the old times, and the years that had taken from both of them their best beloveds.

After the old gentleman had taken his departure, our cousin Starbuck rallied Mother upon the apparently sentimental situation which our coming had interrupted.

'Nonsense,' said Mother, 'Callao is so homely that I couldn't bear to light up!'

It is plain that I came rightfully by my fastidiousness.

While we were living in Edgartown, one day there was an excursion from Nantucket, a great

event for me. Some of the little boys of Grandmother's neighborhood in Nantucket, whom Brother had known and played with in the last interval before Father sailed, came over to see us. These boys eventually became a 'set,' always 'the boys,' keeping together in the Nantucket schools, and when they scattered for business schools or colleges, and afterward took up various professions and other occupations, the intimacy was renewed at least every summer at Nantucket, the old affection intensified with the years, until the ranks began to thin, and thinned so swiftly that at this writing only one is left of the 'boys.' They did good work, each one of them. They raised the average of human character.

That day there must have been six or eight of these well-born, well-bred little boys from ten to thirteen years old. Brother was nearly ten, and he was the youngest. Except for our cousins we had had few playmates in Edgartown, and I, not quite five years old, was entranced at the sight of all these big boys; but I was also very shy.

I remember how handsome Gus was, and he was handsome up to the very last. And Walter was very good-looking, but it was his gentleness and courtesy that attracted me.

I can see now the huge bowls of strawberries and the loaves of sponge cake that were brought forth for these boys. I had an orange that was my very own. I don't know whether some one

had lately given it to me, or whether I had kept it for solitary consumption — for I was always a fruit-eater — but I longed to give that orange to one of Brother's guests from Nantucket.

Only one of them had paid the slightest attention to me, and that was Walter. He had at least spoken to me, and he seemed gentle and friendly, so that I felt less shy toward him. All the same I was facing a new experience.

As they were gathered in the hall about to leave, I slipped in among them and with an admiring glance at the handsome Gus, I sidled unobserved up to Walter and offered my orange. If he was surprised, he didn't show it. Like the thoroughbred that he was, he accepted the offering without hesitation, quietly and as a matter of course.

As I began to grow up, Walter and I had much in common, and I often wished in those years, after he finally ceased to come East for vacations, that we could have again a chance to talk as we used to do when he was visiting his aunt in Nantucket. For 'the boys' always came to us just as they did as children. Walter taught me to make delicious mayonnaise, and as I beat it up for supper we would talk about things and people unendingly. I remember lending him some of Father's logbooks to take back to his parish in western New York, where the people knew nothing at first hand of the sea.

After supper in those old vacation days, Mother and I would take our sewing and listen while Stepfather and Walter would 'reminisce' about old Nantucket. In spite of the difference in their ages they had known many of the same people, and Walter, the oldest of the 'boys,' not only had a good memory of his own youth, but he remembered the stories told by his relatives, many of whom lived to a great age.

His grandmother was one of the guests at Brother's wedding. It was winter, late January, and there was only the one morning boat daily, leaving Nantucket at eight o'clock.

But by a simple financial arrangement of Brother's, it was possible to delay the boat for an hour, so that after the ceremony at eight o'clock there was time for the bride to change her wedding gown and to pretend, at least, to eat her wedding breakfast.

We had such a good time, as friends and relatives risked the chances of January weather and came down to the Island for the event. Walter's grandmother was one of the gayest of the merry party, except that Mother was not merry at all. They never are, mothers like ours, at seeing the only son publicly assume a new 'first allegiance.' All the same, Mother was satisfactory, a gracious Empress Dowager in black velvet.

Grandmother Russell, Walter's grandmother, was ninety-three. As she left the house, she said

to a group of us, 'Do come to see me, girls! There's nobody my age that's got any wits left!'

Hers never failed.

I do not remember very much of those four years in Edgartown, not being a prodigy, but I know that I was petted and made much of by the family and the neighbors.

Grandfather, I think, took greater comfort with Brother, who required less personal attention, and was of an age that could respond to his efforts in educating him.

Brother attended a little school kept by a small, wrinkled woman whose name was Katy Bassett. She certainly was not an imposing figure, but no girl ever longed to go to college more earnestly than I longed to go to Katy Bassett. One day I went 'visiting' and sat in one of the wooden seats just like a real 'scholar,' as the youngsters were optimistically called in those days, and for decades later on. And sometimes I was allowed to sit up a bit after my usual bedtime and listen to Grandfather's lessons to Brother.

There was a big Franklin fireplace in the sitting-room, with a high back like a reredos, of cast iron, reaching nearly to the ceiling. I loved the gleam of the brass knobs on the low iron shelf over the fire, against the shiny blackness. The smooth panels framed in borders of low relief

caught the glow of the firelight reflected from the brass balls, and upon their varnished blackness little flickers of gold danced and vanished and danced again. It made a brave showing.

Then the educational process, though beyond my powers of understanding, was never without interest. Grandfather would write words with chalk on that ornate cast-iron blackboard, and Brother would learn both their spelling and their meaning. In those days, and indeed through all my youth, Spelling was one of the Virtues, and Grammar, too. Defective Grammar was one of the *Seven Deadlies!*

Sometimes Grandfather led Brother farther afield, and asked him strange questions that exceeded the boy's grasp. Then Grandfather would explain, and they both would seem to feel a strange satisfaction when the matter was finally settled.

One evening Grandfather suddenly turned to me and asked me why, when I jumped up, I didn't stay 'up.'

I puzzled over that some time. I knew that there was one of Grandfather's tricks in it somewhere, for he was a whimsical old gentleman at times. But I couldn't find the hidden spring. So I brought a little wooden cricket, placed it in front of Grandfather, jumped 'up' on it and said, 'Now I'm staying up!' and left it to him to prove that I wasn't. It was a distinctly

feminine trick, and what is more, I dimly felt that it *was* a trick, though of course I didn't know how to classify it.

I remember the delicious fragrance of Grandfather's cellar. There were, of course, vegetables and apples, but the place where the casks and kegs stood was the best. Casks of pickled limes, of cocoanuts, of Cape Horn nuts, as English walnuts were called, and Castile nuts, now known as Brazil nuts. And small kegs of lime juice and of tamarinds, both of which made refreshing drinks for warm days. Altogether it was a complex but wholly satisfying smell of nuts and limes and moist wood, and, I suppose, iron rust.

There used to be in my girlhood, down by the water somewhere in Dorchester, possibly at Savin Hill, a huge shed, painted outside a dull, light green. The big doors on the street side were always open, and sometimes there would be narrow panels of light on the gloom within, with a glimpse of water beyond if a door on the other side had been left ajar, on those happy sunny mornings when Dr. C. would drive down that way, just to get that entrancing smell of the casks that floated to us out of the mysterious darkness beyond those open doors.

He would stop the horse, always a fast one, and we would sit in the buggy for blissful moments without speech, gratefully inhaling that fragrance, 'full of the scents of the sea,' and

feeling the spell of the ships, the eternal lure of what Walter Hinchman calls the 'swinging sea.'

Dr. C., in his youth, once made a voyage to India on a sailing vessel, for his health. I don't know what effect it had on his ailment but I do know that he never got over that voyage. Perhaps it accounted for his liking for me when his family and I began to exchange visits. I probably suggested ships and the sea. In any case, that smell of the casks meant to him just what it did to me. So when he asked me to go out with him on his rounds in the morning, I always knew that the route lay in the direction of the water, the shed, and the delicious smell of the casks.

Dear Dr. C.! How his patients adored him! He never grew old. He just stopped. Like Grandfather, he used to ask me questions to hear what I would say. Often after breakfast we would sit by the fire in the sunny dining-room, while equally dear Mrs. C. and the delightful and gifted daughters would be busy with the usual details of the morning, and we would talk of all sorts of matters until Mrs. C. would look in and say, 'Dear, if I don't send Mollie home, this family will be reduced to beggary! Look at that clock!'

So, you see, it saved time to take me with him!

But I must go back to Edgartown where I

began. Mother, I have been told, always dressed me like a little princess. One day, I remember, she had tried on a new dress, just finished, and she wanted our nextdoor neighbor, an intimate friend of hers, to see the effect.

So she called from a window, and then, as the neighbor came to her window, Mother held me up to be admired. But a view of the full-length figure was not possible and the lady was appreciative, so like a flash Mother caught me up with her two hands under my arms and swung me out of the window, holding me firmly while Neighbor feasted her eyes upon the sight, when I was whisked back again.

I was not in the least frightened as I was suspended in midair, for whatever Mother did was felt to be inevitable; no mental processes were required. One didn't even 'submit.' One remained passive; it was the only rôle.

Grandmother Pease had been a Methodist of the old type, and dressed, Mother said, almost as plainly as a Quaker. Grandfather's sister, Great-Aunt Margaret, on the other hand, was a Congregationalist, and that was Mother's church too. Once Great-Aunt Margaret took me to church with her. Mother never had. The pulpit was high, square, and painted white, and was reached by what seemed a long stairway.

I came home calm but critical. I hunted up Grandfather and announced that 'a man got up

in a box and swored.' I regret the implication as to the lack of religious instruction that may be drawn from this statement. But there it is.

And then one day there seemed to be a great excitement all about. People were coming and going, and there was much talking, and a sense of mystery as if something was about to happen. And so there was, for the Islander had been reported 'homeward bound,' and would probably arrive in May!

It was near sunset, but I remember I slipped out unnoticed and ran about the neighborhood to find the few children that Brother and I were allowed to play with, and I promised all of them presents 'out of my father's ship.' For what were ships and fathers for if not to bring things from 'Cape Horn!' Look at the cellar, and, besides, Brother had already written for a sled!

And the next thing I clearly remember was being in a berth on a vessel, for we could only come directly to Nantucket in a packet. I had been asleep, but I was now wide awake, hungry and uncomfortable; the blankets were scratchy.

Some one brought me a huge plate with some meat, red, tough, and so salt! Besides, there was a lot of yellow fat on it. Now this somewhat spoiled child didn't like fat, and every one knew it. Who could these strange people be who didn't understand?

I couldn't eat that awful beef, but I couldn't

bear to hurt any one's feelings, so I didn't fuss; I just went hungry.

Then we were in our own house on Pleasant Street. And the old couple who had been living upstairs all this time had given us a hearty welcome, for they were very fond of the family; and they had now gone up to their own rooms. And while Mother spread a small table and unpacked the big basket of cooked food that she had brought from Edgartown, I stood with Brother at the dining-room window and watched Gus Macy chasing Lottie Pratt up the alley-way, with a gun with a bayonet. I didn't like it very well. It didn't look attractive as either a game or an 'attention.' Brother took it differently; but after all he was hungry, and how good those things did taste after the packet!

And then, one sunshiny day in May, Father came. I had long pored over a daguerreotype of Father, a handsome dark-haired man in a white duck suit and one of those priceless Panama hats that every one wore; and that was my father.

Then my father came. He strode across the sitting-room to Mother, who stood still with Brother and me held close, waiting. My father had grown stout, his hair was iron-gray, and he wore a dark blue suit, and had a black hat in his hand. But it was Father; I knew it.

Just as he neared the little group, I looked up at this tall person and in a voice he had never

heard before — at least in articulate speech — observed critically, 'Why, Father, how you've changed!'

He seemed to catch us all up at once, then, detaching me, he tossed me up to the ceiling, and, putting me down, he felt in his pocket and gave Brother and me each a dime, a 'silver penny.' And we instinctively departed to spend it at once at Quaker John Hosier's shop on Main Street, where there was a wider choice of delectables than at Peter Hussey's on Pleasant Street. Besides, John's was a shade cleaner.

We hadn't understood that even one's own children might at moments be *de trop*, but I think that when we came back we sensed it. We had been bribed.

CHAPTER II

FATHER

FATHER adored his wife and children, and he had a loyal affection for the relatives on both sides, and visits all around were frequent. So far as 'locals' were concerned, our house always seemed to attract them, and they always found a hearty welcome.

Perhaps my favorite was Great-Aunt Phebe, Grandmother's sister, who was as good as a real grandmother after my own had died. Aunt Phebe was very handsome, and her hair would curl all about her face and neck in spite of the immaculate close-fitting Quaker cap.

She had three fine-looking daughters, but none so handsome as she. She wore beautiful clothes, so far as material went. There were wonderful Irish poplins and things that were approved as 'silk-warped,' and soft, rich silks; and silk and crape and downy woolen shawls that swathed themselves gracefully about her tall figure. In time I came to see that the colors, sober as they were, had great beauty, French gray, dark brown with a sheen like sunlight ('silk-warped'), or drab that approached what is known now as beige.

Aunt Phebe thought that nobody could ar-

range those plaits about the waist of the full, plain skirt as deftly and becomingly as Mother, who, among other gifts, was an artist in clothes, and who in this day, especially with Fanny C. as partner, might have made a fortune in designing — and psychologically applying — costumes. Her taste was unerring.

But not only did Aunt Phebe admire and love 'Lois,' for all Father's family did; and Quakers as most of them were, they couldn't help liking the way she dressed.

Brother and I were the only children of the family who lived at Nantucket, and so we grew up in an atmosphere of affection and appreciation.

Great pride was felt in Brother's abilities. From his childhood he was an eager learner, a real student, of scholarly tastes and achievements always, so far as his otherwise busy life permitted. His teachers regarded him as a most satisfactory pupil.

I learned more quickly, was satisfied with far less extensive results and was a good 'show pupil,' always ready to do what was required, sometimes hating it, and more often thinking how silly it all was. But of course I, five years younger than Brother, was a great pet, not only with him, but with the relatives, and especially with Aunt Phebe's family. Her three daughters married and lived away, but came each summer with their

FATHER

children. Her son, Cousin Seth, belongs to my war memories.

Another great-aunt by marriage, a Starbuck relative, however, before she married Grandmother Starbuck's brother, was at this time a widow, living with her three daughters. She came to us every Sunday for supper. She was always to be found, when Brother brought me home from the 'North' Sunday School, comfortably settled in a certain big rocking-chair, a footstool at her feet, and her knitting in her little white hands, for the Friends, or Quakers, refused to recognize any peculiar sanctity about 'First Day,' holding that 'Every day is a holy day.' And I think that most of them lived up to their profession.

This great-aunt was a tiny, exquisite person with a skin like the petal of a faded tea-rose. She was, of course, as immaculately groomed, if not as handsomely dressed as Aunt Phebe, and this daintiness never failed to the time of her last illness. But, indeed, that was nothing unusual. Of differing degrees of personal attractiveness, I never remember a Quaker carelessly dressed. They were always 'ship-shape.' And a more beautiful and impressive set of women I have never happened to see than those who sat on the Elders' seats in the Fair Street Meeting-House. In point of looks, the men were not far behind.

Besides relatives and neighbors and the occasional visitor from 'away,' I seem to recall clearly only one of Father's friends. This one I shall call 'Thomas,' because that was not his name. Thomas was somewhat older than Father, but he lived many years after Father's death. They were both, in their different ways, typical Islanders, of English blood and tradition.

Father was tall and handsome; Thomas was good-looking, rather more powerfully built, and inclined somewhat to the burly type. Both were given to hospitality, Thomas presiding at his table like John Bull on his good behavior because he chose to be. Father's manner was simpler, though not without a suggestion of hidden strength, and both might have just come from the British Parliament, and from either House.

This is as I see them far back in my memory. Both were masterful men, but Thomas was occasionally rather violent about it. I never remember Father's full-toned, beautiful voice raised above normal, though I distinctly recall, on one occasion, a note of impatience at some delay in the arrival of an expected but tardy person. And at the same time there was a whimsical comment on himself, or the situation, that showed that he wasn't really angry. It was, I suppose, his sense of humor that enabled him to keep his control.

It seems to me one of the most necessary at-

tributes of the human being, this sense of humor, this quick perception of relations and values.

These two men had brains enough and to spare, but Father's tastes were of a more intellectual order. Both were well educated for their time. Thomas's wife, who was in school with Father, used to say, 'He'd just look through a book and then he'd know it all.'

Both men were fond of children, especially of their own, for whom nothing could be too good, and few companions good enough.

Knowing well other members of Thomas's family, I think that it is safe to assume that he must have been generous; that would surely have been his nature. But Father's generosity, like Mother's, was, as some one said, 'uncontrollable.'

Like all Nantucketers, insular to an intense degree, these men were superficially of a cosmopolitan sophistication and broad-mindedness. Their personal experiences had widely differed. Thomas had spent a portion of his productive years in business in a large city, while Father had taken the great gamble of the Cape Horn Voyage. Each had gained a wide knowledge of human nature. To them Nantucket was a special creation, and Nantucketers the chosen race.

In spite of their differences in age, in temperament, and in training, there seemed to be a bond of true, personal affection between these two

lately moored Islanders, during the two years after Father's return.

All through the period of Father's illness, Thomas was untiring in his efforts to relieve Mother and to cheer and help his dying friend. I remember that he 'watched' with Father at night, taking turns with a good neighbor, Captain Young, and I know what confidence Mother must have had in the two men, to be willing to give up the care of Father even for the few hours required for her sorely needed rest. It was always difficult for Mother to yield the responsibility or any least bit of the satisfaction of doing everything herself for her own family.

There were no men nurses in those days, nor indeed any trained nurses at all, as we know them. There were, it is true, experienced women who 'went out nursing,' but I think they were summoned chiefly in 'baby cases.' On all other occasions, when the members of the family became exhausted, friends and neighbors were always ready with their services. Probably this condition prevailed in the small towns all through New England, but on Nantucket it was simply a part of the Island life that never changed until very recent years.

Always the preference has been for 'our own.' Even now, when some question is asked about a person who has lived in Nantucket perhaps for the lifetime of the questioner, it may be for

twenty, or even forty years, the little biographical sketch will either begin or end with the casual remark, 'He isn't a Nantucketer.'

Soon after Father's death, Thomas and his family moved to another part of the town, and it was not until my high school days that I began to know him myself. His youngest daughter was a member of my 'set,' and we were always having tea-parties — not 'teas' — at the various houses.

Among the eight or ten girls, 'Charles's daughter' and 'Isaac's daughter' were always received by Thomas with marked courtesy. About the other girls he had his opinions, his shades of approval or disapproval, and, although he sometimes expressed his opinions to his family before the arrival of the guests, his manners as he presided at his table showed no trace of his feelings beyond a certain reserve 'in spots,' noted only by the most intimate of the circle.

Thomas followed Father long ago to that port whose latitude and longitude are known to no living man, and the tenderness of that old friendship is now remembered only by two women, each the last of her family, both feeling that the loneliness which sets them apart is not too great a price to pay for the precious past.

They were big personalities, the Islanders that we knew in our youth, of half a dozen distinct types, but all representative Nantucketers. And whether they were at home or abroad, whether

widely known or only locally, they were felt to be men of grasp, of power, and of individuality. Go to the Historical Rooms and see their portraits, and at the same time you might glance at the portraits of their wives.

Frank, the lawyer, studying a daguerreotype of Father, once asked, 'Did people usually do what your father said?'

'They did,' I answered.

'I should think,' he observed thoughtfully, 'that a very few words would have indicated the direction they'd better take.'

Dr. Ben found in one of Father's logbooks an entry (by the mate who wrote up the log), stating that 'Captain Starbuck has Tony up on deck teaching him navigation. If anybody can teach him it is Captain Starbuck.' Father was a born teacher as well as commander, like other members of the family on both sides. Aunts, uncles, and cousins all were devoted to him. My aunt, Mother's only and younger sister, told me that she was busy in the kitchen at Grandfather's one day soon after Mother was married, and Father came up softly behind her and slipped over her head a gold chain with a gold watch on it. I wonder if any young girl of to-day could match that for a 'thrill'!

When Father met Mother, he was in Edgartown waiting for his ship to be ready for sea. Owing to the bar at the entrance to Nantucket

Harbor, a ship had to be loaded outside; and sometimes, after being fitted out at Nantucket, the ship would be taken over to the Vineyard, and loaded in the harbor of Edgartown, where the water was of sufficient depth, and then sail from there.

In either case the stores and other supplies for the long voyage were lightered out in small sloops. These vessels were apparently not built for speed, since 'astern of the lighter' was a phrase often applied to the habitual laggard. And housewives when the work dragged would sometimes say, 'I'm behind the lighter to-day; it seems as if I should never fetch night.'

Father was never 'behind the lighter'; so after meeting Mother three times, he came to the house one bitter cold morning before daylight and routed out Grandfather and asked to see Mother. His ship was to sail at sunrise. Mother dressed hastily, and, wrapped in a big shawl, descended to the room where Father waited. The hearth-fire of course was out.

When toward the end of her life, Mother told me the story, it seemed to me a trifle out of the ordinary for a girl to receive a caller before daylight, and in a freezing cold room, too; but I let that pass. When the story was told, I did exclaim, 'But you surely couldn't engage yourself to marry a man after seeing him only three times!'

'Well,' said Mother serenely, 'I told him that he might come back!'

That was a wooing worthy of the pair.

Mother's wedding gown was a pale 'peach-bloom' brocade, of a beautiful texture. There's still a bit of it in existence after having served two or three other members of the family. Like the Lyons satin, it never wore out. Both fabrics are firm and cannot be torn. That is because they are the pure product of the silkworm, I was told by an expert in such matters who asked to see the satin brought from Cape Horn so long ago.

'Cape Horn' was the generic term for all ports on the West Coast. At the city of Concepción, in Chili, could be found beautiful products of French manufacture, with goods from other countries. That was where many of Father's purchases for Mother were made; for instance, the black Lyons velvet mantle that I clearly remember. It was yard-wide velvet, lined with white silk, and there was a soft chenille tassel between the shoulders where some cleverly placed little plaits fitted the back gracefully to the figure of the wearer. Then there were the Lyons satins, and it was in the city of Concepción that the creamy crape shawl was bought for its 'weight in gold.' Probably there were several, if not a good many, of these shawls on Nantucket that had been bought for this uncertain price. If like Mother's, they had long 'sewing-silk fringe,' with

wide netting at the top; of course, that increased the value a good deal.

It was a royal way of buying things — by their weight in gold — and sentimentally it was a far cry from the whales and harpoons, blubber-spades and try-pots, that made possible such a magnificent gesture. And it is shawls and china and lacquer ware, rather than oil casks, that are suggested by the term 'whaling' to us who were born in the last years of that industry. Many of the whaling captains like Father had excellent taste that could be freely trusted; though of course it was not unheard of for a captain to sail with definite orders of great detail from those nearer to him than the shipowners. And one of them was known to have failed in his commission.

A certain woman had asked for a set of china, and when the ship came home the Captain had several casks, in which it was packed, taken to his house. The eager wife stood close to the Captain as he unheaded the first cask.

In the tense silence he carefully uncovered and lifted out a dish of exquisite green-and-white china.

'Oh,' cried the wife, 'I wanted blue!'

In a silence quite as tense as that which had preceded the brief exclamation, the Captain wrapped and replaced the beautiful dish, carefully refitted and fastened the head of the cask,

and ordered all of them to be taken to the cellar. And there they remained untouched for long years.

Even legend is silent as to what took place between the Captain and his wife after those casks had been snugly stowed away in the cellar; as to whether there ensued badinage or argument, as to whether the time-honored weapon of tears, or the more powerful machinery of speechless gloom was trained on the Captain, who, in any case, has my entire sympathy.

One of our neighbors for many years was Captain Bailey. He had known and loved Father as a boy, and his friendship for our family was never-failing.

His gentle wife was a favorite of Mother's. I always loved to hear Mrs. Bailey's soft low voice relating some incident of 'when we were in Lahaina' as casually as if Lahaina were as familiar as New Bedford, as indeed it was to many Nantucketers.

Dr. Ben always liked to quote the Captain's way of intimating to his wife the lateness of the hour, when they were out visiting. 'Come, 'Lizy,' he would say, 'time to h'ist up your topping-lift.'

On one occasion, when I was quite a grown-up young woman, Mother and I were taking our leave after an evening with the Baileys, and,

shaking hands with the kindly old Captain, I wished him a smiling 'Good-night.' Standing on the threshold, he looked down at me with a curiously sweet expression and said in such an affectionate voice, 'Oh, Charley Starbuck!' Then, his face lighting, he added, 'See her eyes shine! The clever little rascal!'

Wasn't that lovely! After all those years!

One summer a sea captain from New Bedford with his family had a house in Mooers Lane. It was in the early days of the Historical Association, and we were busy arranging our rapidly increasing collection in the Quaker Meeting-House on Fair Street, which had to serve at first for our museum; so I often saw the Captain in his wheel-chair as I went through the lane. And one day I spoke to him, and asked him if he had ever known my father.

'Charles Starbuck?' he exclaimed joyously. 'Why, I laid with him in Payta!'

And then I could all at once see those two blunt-nosed New England whale-ships as they rolled and rose in unison and bowed to each other understandingly in that harbor on the West Coast while the tide made in and out from the Pacific, and their respective masters gammed on shore or in their cabins during the intervals of the business that kept them in port.

Of course Dr. Ben had already made friends with this visiting captain, and had claimed the

privilege of wheeling him down to the Agricultural Fair Grounds for the annual show.

The gallant Captain had lost both legs. I was told that because of some injury on shipboard one was amputated at sea, and on his arrival home, it was found necessary to take off the other. But he was gallant still and submitted as if it were the normal way of navigation, to being handled like a baby by his devoted sons, or by other people if it happened to come about casually.

One day, when I chanced to be working alone in the Meeting-House, and he had been left there to be called for later, I wanted to show him something on the second floor, so I went out and summoned two men who were passing, and, with mutual willingness on the part of the carriers and the carried, the Captain was taken up and down the narrow and winding stairs.

I never saw him after that summer, and now he and our beloved Dr. Ben and so many others whom we have cherished, and who cherished us, have gone where, we trust, they may be permitted an occasional gam about the old days that are no more. Though out of our sight, they cannot be out of the universe.

At the Columbus Celebration on the Hudson, I was with a party from Orange in a small tug, and with all the rest of the motley fleet of attendants, we followed the White Squadron up

the North River. And at the sight of the New York side of the river so closely packed with human beings from the Battery to Grant's Tomb that the faces looked like pin-heads on a cushion, I was suddenly overwhelmed at the thought of the innumerable hosts who had lived and died.

Afterward I said to Dr. Ben, 'How shall we find our beloveds in the Day of Judgment?'

'Doesn't thee know,' he answered, 'that the law of attraction will hold there just as it does here?'

It was during those two years of Father's life after his return from sea that Wilson Macy had that terrible illness that handicapped him physically for life.

He was Brother's most intimate friend always, and he was my first visitor when I arrived on this planet. And in his last years, when Brother was prolonging his own life by living in California, Wilson seemed to feel that in what measure he could he must take Henry's place.

I used to call him 'Guardian,' and there were times when that undersized and delicate body with the noble head, and a face that always reminded me of a star in its brightness, became as a tower of strength for many persons besides me. There wasn't a member of the important New York firm with which Wilson was connected for thirty-five years, from the senior partner to the

porters, who in any difficulty failed to avail himself of his interest, his judgment, and, when needed, his tenderest sympathy.

It was inflammatory rheumatism that defeated this swiftest runner among the boys. The first time that he went out of his own yard after the long illness, Joseph, the Macys' farmer and general factotum for forty years, engineered Wilson on his crutches along the street to our house where he was to have supper. I remember how gently Father looked out for him, and what a wonderful thing it seemed to Brother and me to have Wilson with us again. It was a sort of festival.

After supper Father took Wilson out of his chair and stood him on his feet and reached for the crutches, but Wilson was too weak even to stand for a moment without support, and he fell over backward and lay without a sound until Father lifted him in his arms and carried him to the kitchen. He had a chair brought and seated himself facing the open doorway. Then, holding Wilson firmly between his knees, he told Brother to bring one of the pistols.

A pair of blood-curdling 'horse pistols' had formed part of Father's cabin armament on board ship. They were huge affairs, and I didn't much care for them, but to the boys they were possessions greatly to be envied. And now Wilson, held snug and safe with Father's arms around

him, had the joy of firing the pistol several times until the humiliation of his fall had quite slipped out of his mind. Wilson never whimpered, but some of us realized what it often meant to him to conceal his wounded pride. Father knew, I am sure.

Now Father, like most seafarers, having given up the sea, set about finding what could be done on shore. The Civil War was on, his health was broken, and he had lost most of his money. He had invested money in the Islander, and the voyage had not been successful. And the other ship in which he had invested had also made a poor voyage.

So there was no question now of the new house he had intended to build according to his own plans when he should come home after this last voyage. Mother told me of their plans, long afterward, but I never heard the subject mentioned at that time.

Father was not a man to cry over spilled milk. He marched 'breast forward' to the end. Brother has told me that, ailing as he was, Father would not give up on board ship. He had a little house built on deck over the steering gear, and in it he had a huge chair, designed by himself, with high sides something of the style of a wing chair, except that the wings sloped downward to the comfortable arms.

It was upholstered, the padding being very

thick, and of straw or hay or perhaps oakum, for it was not soft and yielding, though most comfortable. The original covering was, I think, French calico, since I remember some cushions or pillows from Father's cabin with that sort of covering. The chair was, of course, re-covered when it was brought to the house, and I remember the English chintz, white background covered thickly with tiny black dots, and a spatter of little pink rosebuds and green leaves. I'd like to match that chintz now — it was lovely.

Underneath the seat of this chair was a deep drawer for books and papers. And here Father sat day after day, navigating the ship himself all the way home. Moses Joy has lately told me that he plainly remembered seeing, when he was a boy, this unusual sort of little house on the deck of the Islander, and though he never saw it he heard all about the wonderful chair.

It was here that Father amused himself by making the scrapbooks, some of which I still have, though many of them were given away, and I almost regret one that must have been four inches thick. They are beautifully made, strongly bound, and never a blister in or on them. The covers are of several thicknesses of paper pasted together, then varnished, and the backs are of leather. The covers never cracked nor became discolored. The contents were carefully culled from newspapers chiefly, or sometimes an odd

magazine of the comparatively few that were published at that time, 'The Boston Olive Branch,' 'Gleason's Weekly,' and 'Ballou's Pictorial' were among them.

One of the books has Brother's name on the cover, in large letters cut from newspapers, and one has little daughter's name. His little boy would be ten years old, and the baby girl he had left at the age of six months would be five years old when he should give them the scrapbooks, so patiently and lovingly made on shipboard 'round Cape Horn.' One of Brother's letters to Father referred to the baby sister as a 'regular witch.' Another letter of about this period requested Father to bring home a sled; and in order that it might be what he wanted, Brother made a sketch of the sled.

Father got the letter, addressed

Captain Charles E. Starbuck,
Bark Islander,
Pacific Ocean,
Anywhere.

It was rather an original idea to order a sled from the Pacific Ocean, but 'Anywhere' gave some leeway, and of course Father did not fail his son. The sled was brought home. It was made on board ship by the cooper, and was found to come up to the specifications as detailed in the letter facing page 38. The paper was pink.

Father drew me to Cent School on that sled. I was much pleased to have it used for my convenience and pleasure, that beautiful sled, the property of my big brother. It was really a beautiful sled, very graceful in its lines and very carefully finished. It was painted black with a border of shades of green and golden yellow in a conventional leaf design, and in a crescent near the front was the word 'Islander,' the name of Father's ship, the lettering in the same shaded green and gold.

In spite of Father's ill-health and many disappointments, there never seemed to be anything gloomy or depressing about our home life, except on one occasion in which this sled had an important part. On a certain dark, foggy day, I happened to see Father with a knife or chisel busy in erasing the 'Is' and the 'er' from the name on the sled, and so leaving the word 'land.' It looked bare and meager to me. The house seemed very still; nobody made any comment about this queer thing that Father did. It wasn't like him, because he always wanted things to be perfect.

I felt a little frightened, and, as the grown-ups would have said, 'as if something were going to happen.' In this case it had already happened, and I suppose that the incident marked one of Father's moods of silent realization.

Of course Father made a great pet of Brother's

Dear Father I want you to send me a sleigh runner and I have been on board of the constitution and I think it beats your ship I want the sleighrunner made like this one that I have drawn at the top of the ~~writeins~~ writeins. and sister says that she wants some candy when I ask her what she wated me to write you to send her a and mother was walking in the garden when she picked up your gold stud

'regular witch,' now big enough to be taken with him when he went to see the more elderly relatives. Usually I loved to go. But one day we called on a sick person. It was the first time that I had seen a grown person, with a nightgown on, in bed in the daytime. It offended me. The plain old lady in the plain nightcap seemed so glad to see Father, and she shook hands with me, but she wasn't interested. Neither was I. So I sat quietly in the chair where I had been placed, and suffered. The room was very clean, but it was also very bare, as Quaker bedrooms were likely to be. There was nothing to look at but the plain furniture, the bare walls, and the unattractive invalid. I sat motionless, dumb, and distinctly uncomfortable. I 'behaved.'

Father must have understood, for he called me to him, took me on his knee, and all at once I was content, and waited with serenity until he was ready to go. I never knew who the old lady was — I did not care, for I never had any curiosity about people in whom I wasn't personally interested. So I did not ask to repeat the visit. Once was enough; the experience has lasted all my life, and it has had an educational value, I am sure.

Father liked to read lying down. One evening he was lying on a most comfortable lounge that served us many years and he was holding a little pewter sperm-oil lamp in one hand. I was play-

ing on the floor beside the lounge. Suddenly turning a page, the lamp tipped a little and came too near his heavy, iron-gray curling hair, and a little column of smoke puffed up with a tiny tongue of flame. Startled, I cried out, and Father, blowing out the light of the little lamp, caught me in his arms, held me tight, murmuring, 'She was afraid for Father.'

It was one of the horrible moments of my life. I very well knew that it was not 'fear for Father.' I didn't, I am sure, even think of him distinctly as being in danger. It was not exactly fear, but pure nervousness, the shock of the unexpected, that made me cry out. At any rate, it wasn't what Father thought.

And yet I knew that I must not try to explain. I don't suppose that I could have made myself clear. I only knew that Father would be hurt if I told him. I realized that I must be still and endure being loved and petted for something that wasn't true. It was cheating. It was sickening. It was intense suffering, but I was helpless. Even at six years life was not simple.

I do not know whether he realized or not how serious his condition was at this time. I do know that he soon began to have difficulty in breathing, and that when he walked out to the 'lots' that he had bought, a mile or two from town, he often used to stop and lean on a fence and get his breath. Curiously enough for a seafaring man,

he drank neither tea nor coffee, nor did he care for 'liquor,' as Mother scornfully called the whole alcoholic product of fruit, flower, and vegetable when aided by man's ingenuity.

Father didn't smoke habitually either; indeed, I remember seeing him only once smoke with a friend who was calling. But he did enjoy eating; and everything had to be of the best — and he was a judge.

There was a little, very clean meat-market on Pleasant Street, and it was there that the sausage meat was prepared for our winter use. Father supervised the first mixing. He had his own notions as to the right proportions of beef, pork, fat, and lean, and the amount of condiments required. So starting them off in good order, the results were perfectly satisfactory. This sausage mixture was packed in bags made of unbleached cotton, about three inches in diameter, and two or three feet in length. They were hung in the attic, and brought down as needed through the winter. Nobody ate sausages in warm weather in those days. Fresh pork in the summer was unheard of. The little cakes of sausage meat were cut about an inch and a half thick. Perhaps there is something better in the way of sausages than those little cakes. Perhaps not.

It must have been just after Father came home that the barn and henhouse were built, since I cannot remember when they were not

where they are now. These two buildings, like all Father's work, were built to last, and they have lasted to the present day. The henhouse was lathed and plastered like a house, and was kept almost as clean. The plaster is still intact, not even cracked.

It was long ago that the last little flock of poultry each morning left the spacious 'living room' where the roosts were, by one low doorway, returning after breakfast and the morning constitutional in the run behind the barn, and, by another low doorway, going directly to the nests at one end of the vestibule for their daily offering of fresh eggs.

The henhouse is now used in summer for storing the storm-doors and sashes, and for the chairs and rugs that are used in my 'garden'; and the garden guests begin in June, when the Reverend Edward opens the season for me, and they continue until some day in October, when Bessie decides that it is a little too chilly to bring her pads and fountain pen for a sitting even in the sunshine of the garden, and we regretfully agree that the 'season' is over. But the time has come for wood fires and reading to each other our recurring bits of 'self-expression' or other people's finished productions. And then there are rides and walks over the glory of the commons, a glory that can be only faintly suggested by either word or pigment.

This 'between-season' period is, to those who know it, the favorite time of the year, and even my 'garden' holds for long its share of the beauty and the peace.

Well, when the place had been made ready, Father bought a cow, a great handsome creature, of a deep mahogany color, temperamental, but giving an unusual number of quarts of what might well be called cream. Her day-old cream was like heavy kid for tint and almost for texture. Rather a flat skimmer was used to slip around the edge of the yellow milk-bowl so that the cream might be folded over and taken out like an omelet, without breaking.

We all liked cream, and for sauce for berry puddings nothing could be better than heavy cream streaked with 'half-boiled' molasses, poured on afterward on one's plate in quantity according to the individual taste. Sometimes instead of molasses, which was light-colored New Orleans, brown sugar would be boiled to the same consistency, and of all sugars the most beautiful was Muscovado. I don't know where it came from nor what it was used for, except for sauce, but it was very sweet, and in the sunshine, heaped up in a big red earthen bowl, it sparkled like powdered goldstone. We didn't have it often, and I haven't seen any for a long time.

Presently our live stock was increased by the purchase of a little pig, as clean as a kitten. A

tiny house had been built for his reception, and a sty excavated in one corner of the yard close to the barn. There was a little piazza in front of the little house and a stairway leading to the pit below. I don't remember what became of the little pig. Probably he was allowed to grow to the proper size and then perhaps we ate him.

I have a vague remembrance of another little pig in after years, but the recollection is very hazy. I know that the little house was eventually taken away and the morass filled in, chiefly with ashes, and I have a vivid remembrance of the roses that for many years flourished in that spot as they did nowhere else on the place.

A sundial now marks the site of the little house. And that is all it marks, for between the white lilac trees and the almost as tall pink honeysuckle shrubs, time is only fitfully registered on the dial. But during the summer nobody seems to care what time it is in my garden.

All these live things that Father collected made several fences necessary, with gates, big and little. And so the 'garden' wasn't as large as it is now, with all the open spaces, and only the low stone wall topped by a hedge of honeysuckle and clematis to screen the 'farm,' which supplies me with vegetables, and to that end is tended faithfully, like the rest of the place, by that born gardener and lover of beauty, Manuel of San Miguel.

But the premises, cut up as they were, presented a far from unattractive appearance, for they were kept scrupulously clean, and fences, vegetable garden, grass plot, flower beds, and grapevines were all in the pink of condition for those two years of Father's life at home.

Just before he was taken ill, he had been corresponding with my uncle in New London about a horse, and seafarer as he was, he knew exactly what he wanted and as intelligently as any other man.

There was already a box wagon in the barn — the carriage house — the portion now used in the summer for a studio by some one of my artist friends.

Out at the lots there was another barn for the hay that was raised. And down in a hollow there was a spring, and Eliza and I found great delight in taking our lunch and playing at housekeeping in the sweet-smelling barn while Father was busy about the place. Prospect Hill Burying-Ground, which we passed on our way to the lots, was a favorite spot for us when the bird's-foot violets were in bloom. They grew there in great profusion, and were unusually large and of exquisite color. They grow now abundantly on the open common, and this violet is one of our wild-flowers that is not yet perceptibly diminishing. Perhaps that is because it takes the precaution to come early, before the tourist season opens. The

Burying-Ground has encroached many feet on the roadways and pasture lands that surrounded it.

Father had many little ways that were quite his own. He had no bookplate, but his books were clearly marked in this fashion:

Mine! To be returned!
Charles E. Starbuck.

On the fly-leaf of a little book bound in shiny, light green, is this inscription:

A present from my little friend.
S. E. Stanton.

Charles E. Starbuck,
at sea,
Dec. 1859

Perhaps S. E. Stanton is still living. I wish that I knew. 'At sea' accounts probably for her choice of a book for Father. The title-page reads:

A
Teacher's Gift
consisting of
Original Essays in Prose and Verse,
and
Translations from the French
by
S. E. Janney,
Author of the Last of the Lenape, and other Poems.
Philadelphia:
T. Ellwood Chapman.
1840

In this little book 'Mine! To be returned!' is not written. Apparently Father had no intention of lending this gift from a child 'at sea.' I doubt if any 'best seller' has ever been more appreciatively received, or will ever be so tenderly cherished as this little 'Teacher's Gift.' It is mine now.

Our silver salt-spoons are engraved 'Mine,' and many household articles like tin hand basins and tin pails were marked 'Ours.' Even our fire-bags were marked 'Mine.' The Great Fire of '46, always referred to simply as 'The Fire,' had branded the Nantucket consciousness so indelibly that the dread of fire became an hereditary attribute of the Islanders.

After that fire every family, whether there were 'fire-buckets' hanging in the front hall or not, was provided with 'fire-bags.' Ours were made of white canvas or sail-cloth, and one at least of heavy denim. They were about four, perhaps five feet long, at least two feet in diameter, with round bottoms sewed on and firmly felled down with fine stout twine. The white bags had the word 'Mine,' in letters of blue denim, at least eight inches in height. The rule was that in case of fire the contents of bureau drawers and bedding chests should first be thrust into these bags, half a dozen of which would hold a goodly amount of bedding and clothing supposed to be kept in these drawers, and to be of first impor-

tance to the possibly houseless owner. The last one of these old fire-bags has been used for bringing home pine cones for the hearth-fire, on which soon the bag itself — for it is wearing out — may be regretfully placed as on a funeral pyre.

Father had begun to make some alterations in the house, since it seemed to be settled that this was to be our permanent home. Among other improvements he proposed to turn the 'porch chamber' into a bathroom, for he, like many seafaring men, was of great personal fastidiousness. There was a sink upstairs in this room, and a small pump. Just underneath in the corner of the yard there was a ninety-barrel cistern for rainwater. This cistern was beautifully built, of brick, with a dome-shaped cement top, and over the round opening on the ground level a wooden cover about three feet square.

Some years after, this pump was brought down and placed outdoors near the cistern and used for watering the flower beds and the grass. And long years after that, when water had been led into the house, and Mother and I were living all by ourselves, Mother conceived the idea of filling up the now unused cistern. The garden hose had taken the place of the once much-prized pump and the reservoir. It did seem a pity to waste all that excellent masonry, but it had served its purpose, and the cistern made a convenient receptacle for ashes and the usual accumulation

of rubbish that now goes to the public dump. Sometimes an old coal hod would follow the ashes into this apparently bottomless pit, sometimes an out-of-date cooking utensil, broken china, bottles and jugs and cracked earthen jars; in short anything useless or whose use had been supplanted by more modern means. It took five years to fill the cistern to the top, so that it could be sodded over and thus keep the contents safe for the future excavator.

After many deaths and other changes in Elma's family, a general clearing-out became necessary for new arrangements to be made. The discards were used to fill in a portion of the swamp in the meadows back of the house. One day she said that she had dragged across-lots two feather beds, and among other smaller articles four or five beaver hats. We thought that it would be a curious combination to dig up! Future generations may be informed that their ancestors went to bed with their hats on instead of the traditional boots, or that the Nantucketers wore beaver hats instead of nightcaps. Nantucketers always were different!

I think that Father would probably have worked out some means for getting hot water upstairs without much trouble, but as it happened the tub was never placed as intended. It was all ready, a huge affair of wood, painted yellow and lined with zinc. And it was to have

been put where the sink had been and just where a bathtub is now, for the porch chamber is after all a bathroom, according to Father's plan so long ago.

I like to think of Father's exquisite cleanliness in those days when hygienic requirements were not only simple but, more often than not, of a negative sort.

I remember that Father's shirts had to be of the finest linen, handmade, of course, and fitting as perfectly for a shirt as a coat for a coat. One little lady, living in one of the houses on Main Street, was entrusted with this important item of Father's wardrobe. I recall clearly the dainty little figure and her satisfactorily dainty work. I never heard her speak. I never saw her outside her home. She was one of the many spinsters who existed, like a piece of furniture apparently, in her parents' house.

Father's shoe ribbons were always carefully tied and the bows flattened out perfectly. Mother said that this detail was attended to even if he was going to a fire. But I am sure that no time was lost in the process.

These object lessons of the everyday life seem to me invaluable in a child's education — this unconscious absorption of standards. Cleanliness, accuracy, love of perfection in details, courage, and generosity, are all good stones for a foundation.

Afterward, when people seemed to fall short of the standards we were used to, the reason why had to be discovered. It was often found to be a perfectly good reason, too, so that, without altering our own, allowance could be made for different standards, even for none. Standards and ideals unconsciously acquired do not seem to make for narrowness, but eventually for clarity and charity.

Father must have been steadily losing ground, but of course Brother and I did not realize that, because until near the end he had not been ill in bed. He was always so big and strong, so fine-looking, so indulgent to us children, so good to other boys and girls, so exactly what fathers should be.

Then suddenly Father was gone. We should never see him, nor hear the loving voice again. Father was dead.

I don't remember anything about the funeral except that, when we came back to the house afterward, every one seemed so gentle and kind to Mother. All our neighbors were there, but I particularly remember Delia, the beautiful woman who lived just across the street. She was so tender with Mother, murmuring little comforting words as she untied Mother's wide bonnet strings.

And then, when every one had gone, Mother took Brother and me in her arms and sobbed that we would 'go home to Grandfather's.'

CHAPTER III

FIRST SCHOOLS AND OUR SUSAN

THE Cent School was in Pine Street, corner of School Street. One of 'Charles G.'s' sons had come back with his wife to the Island to live. She was Captain Arthur's daughter, and her very much younger sister was one of my chosen playmates at this school. I do not remember that my experiences here were very exciting, though I enjoyed going.

Mrs. Coffin kept a jar of sticks of barley candy on the mantel, and the children often brought an extra penny for the purchase of one of these. You could stick one end of the candy into an orange and if it worked rightly the white sugar spiral that decorated the light lemon-colored barley stick would melt and you could suck up the juice of the orange through the little winding canal.

The Coffins had lost their only child, who had been about my age, and perhaps that accounted for my place in their affections. Mr. Coffin would sometimes come in near the end of the session, and taking me on his lap would sit by the fire while Mrs. Coffin got the children into hoods and rubbers and sent them off home; and then she would join her husband, and they would

talk quietly together for a while, and finally I was put down, cloaked and hooded, and started homeward. I don't remember thinking that this retention of me alone was at all strange. I never cared particularly to go out with the rest of the children. But looking back after all these years, those quiet little visits by the fire, to which, so far as I know, I contributed only my physical presence, are pathetically suggestive.

I don't know when I learned my letters. I certainly couldn't read when Brother's lessons were being given on the iron blackboard in Edgartown. But I could read when I went to Cent School, for I remember one special day, when, with tears of nervousness and discouragement, I learned at last to spell 'classification.' The word has always seemed to stand for something very important, but difficult of achievement, since it gains in fluidity as the years go on.

There wasn't much management about this school. We sat on chairs and backless benches, and we were kept safe and warm, and out of harm's way. In recess, if the weather was good, we played in the grassy yard. If it was stormy, why, in addition to the schoolroom, there was the pump-room, which I didn't much fancy. It was small and dark, and the only furniture besides the pump consisted of an old chair or two, tubs and coal hods.

Among the various Cent Schools in the town

there was one 'down Newtown way' that boasted a special feature, not without its attractiveness to children. Cent School tuition was usually paid semi-daily, the penny for each session being duly brought in moist little hand or red woolen mitten according to the season. Sometimes on request a weekly bill would be sent with deductions for absences, if any had occurred. But this Newtown School provided a sort of intermediate course for which the price was three cents daily!

A family of little girls — four, I think — were brought in every morning from one of the farms, a mile or two from town. Either their lunch was brought with them, or their father left it at the house some time during the forenoon. So from twelve o'clock until one-thirty these children were duly washed and fed and generally looked out for, three cents apiece being paid for the job.

One big-eyed little girl, whom I knew long afterward, was an only child, and often necessarily companionless, and these 'lunch parties' filled her soul with longings unutterable. However, she was blessed with parents who understood children, even if they had only one of their own, so for an especial treat little gray-eyes was sometimes fitted out with lunch basket and the extra three cents, and sent off happily with anticipations of the 'party' at noon.

There was a Cent School nearer to us on Main Street, kept by Miss Cottle. It was in one of two

MARY STARBUCK AT FIVE

MOTHER AND BROTHER

little one-story buildings standing then next to the Burdick house. The important thing about the other building was the big sign, 'Saws set and whet.' We knew what a saw was, but we didn't know what was done to it by the little black-eyed man who kept the place, which hardly had enough things in it to be called a shop.

Miss Cottle's pupils were younger than we, little things who sat in little armchairs, with trays fastened in front of them! In recess they played in the back room of the building, which had been used for some sort of a shop, dry-goods probably. All around the side counters were piled up, and on one side they were so arranged, with the tops toward the wall, that their sloping insides furnished a short but thrilling slide, the thrill being provided by the shortness of the slide, ending immediately after the momentum was achieved, in the sudden drop of three feet more or less to the floor.

Sometimes we of the older school visited these infants fastened into their little chairs, and during the session we felt very superior, but in recess the disparity of age was less apparent, and we crawled into those piled-up counters and took the slide with the infants.

Miss Cottle taught me, though a visitor, to pronounce carefully the name of the orange-and-brown pouch-like flowers in pots in the sloping window-sill, that had once been used for the

display of goods. The name of the flower was 'Calceolaria.' Whenever I hear the name, or see the flower, which is seldom, I can see once more the rows of little armchairs, the little chubby children, the very plain but kind and motherly woman, and the mysterious calceolarias looking so out of place on the bare white-painted sloping window-sill; and then the other picture of the semi-dark north room with the piled-up counters for its only furnishing, and the little children of all degrees of boldness and timidity crawling inside and carefully turning over to the right position in the cramped space, then slipping a moment and clumping down plump on the dusty floor.

While I was attending Cent School on the corner of Pine and School Streets, a Nantucket family lived in the Burnell house across the way. Sammy came to Cent School, and I remember playing with him as a little boy, but it is all rather vague except that I considered his cousin interesting. He did not come to Cent School, and he did not live on the Island, but I seemed to know him very well. He was a nephew of the wife of Uncle Callao.

I do recall more vividly one evening when I was having supper at Sammy's. I was much embarrassed at being at a 'party' without my family. I had never minded being the most conspicuous thing at what Harry D. called

'relationary' parties, when I was always at table perched up on a dictionary or other big volume placed in a grown-up chair, and served with the choicest tidbits and the smallest potatoes, which latter attention I secretly resented. I knew perfectly well how to comport myself under those circumstances, but this was an experience for which there was no precedent. I had, for instance, no special little glass mug, or perhaps a china one with a picture, no dear little special pitcher such as the Macy 'aunts' always had for me, and though this was only Sammy's family who made the party, I was uncomfortable.

Then suddenly Sammy's father, a very large man with an important manner, addressed a question to me. In my surprise and confusion I answered bravely but mistakenly, 'Yes, Ma'am'; and immediately perceiving my mistake, was overwhelmed with humiliation and wretchedness. And alas, with incredible obtuseness or equally incredible temerity, my host corrected me then and there!

'You should say "Yes, Sir," to me,' he observed, not even lowering his big voice.

In agony I finished my supper, with, I think, no outward sign of suffering. It was the only way to get taken home. Wild horses wouldn't have made me ask for that privilege! As the years passed, I outgrew the pain and humiliation of that evening, but never my resentment at the

stupidity of that man and the tactless affront to my dignity.

I think that I attended Cent School only one year, because when Father died two years after his return, I was already going to the 'Intermediate,' having skipped 'Primary.'

According to custom on the Monday after the funeral, I went back to school. As I appeared, the children announced my coming, as children will, with a reference to my personal affairs. 'Her Father's dead! Her Father's dead!' they shouted, dancing about me in their excitement.

Now, even if I could not fully realize the meaning of all that had happened during the past week, I had seen and felt quite enough for a sensitive child, seven years old, to bear. At this brutal reproach, that awful feeling of loneliness came upon me and, in spite of efforts at control, I burst into tears, whereupon the chant was changed to 'Cry-baby! Cry-baby!'

With sobs that I tried in vain to suppress, I sought my teacher for sympathy, and with some difficulty managed to say, 'My Father is dead, and I cried, and the scholars called me cry-baby!'

Teacher looked at me calmly, without a smile, and said, 'Well, you are, aren't you?'

I wasn't, any longer.

Perhaps that was the right way to deal with a sensitive, emotional child. It certainly worked, and I never forgot it.

This teacher at the Intermediate used to curl her hair after she got to school in the morning. One of the pupils would bring her a battered tin basin with water, and she would take out of her desk drawer a brush and comb, and proceed to curl her hair over a curling stick. The basin was taken away, brush and comb and curling stick returned to the drawer, and then she called the school to order and read a chapter of the Scriptures.

The assistant had hair that couldn't uncurl, jet-black and rather coarse. She usually wore it in about a dozen curls of even length, just reaching her shoulders. She was a handsome woman with great black eyes and pink cheeks, and she was tolerant toward children. On winter mornings when, I suppose, the time was short for breakfast and toilet, she used to come with her hair parted in the back and rolled into two magnificent thick curls, nearly two inches in diameter, and solid as chair-legs. They were less attractive than the more feminine daily dozen.

The mention of chair-legs reminds me that, because the floor was so cold, this teacher used to sit with her feet on a chair; and I, being plump and warmly dressed, was often honored by an invitation to sit on this chair to keep her feet warm. I was supposed to appreciate my position, but it wasn't very comfortable and there was no

place at all for *my* feet, and not enough place for the rest of me.

Behind the teacher's chair was a blackboard, sometimes used for the demonstration of sundry uninteresting facts that bore some relation to the abstraction known as 'education.' Between the lower edge of the blackboard and the wainscoting there was a wide crack, capable in certain winds of admitting draft enough to sail, if not a ship, at least a good-sized catboat. This was a source of annoyance to teacher, who was of a reposeful temperament, and didn't like being disturbed by anything, so she nailed across the crack, at the proper height to protect her head and neck, a square of heavy, velvet carpet, whose brilliant roses may or may not have had an æsthetic value, but they certainly brought a note of cheerfulness into the dingy room. I hated that room, but I did like my handsome teacher, then and always.

My attendance at the Intermediate — a public school, of course — could not have been of long duration, whenever it began, for I did not go back after the long vacation in the summer. I did not enjoy the time there. The rooms were dreary in spite of the many grimy windows, too high, anyway, for us to look out, and it was always chilly and so smelly! Except for a small bunch of children with whom I played in recess, I knew none of the pupils and only the names of very few.

These three girls with whom I played were a little older than I, and had attended this school before I appeared. Marjorie was the oldest. Our favorite play was 'Mother,' Marjorie always assuming the rôle, with Sharley, destined to become my sister-in-law, and Hattie, who early became a celebrity because of the efforts of a local artist to transfer to canvas the beauty of her creamy skin and curly hair. Small photographs were made of this life-size portrait, and were conspicuously in evidence on the mantel of almost every house we visited. The pose showed the originality of the artist, since nobody who knew her could ever imagine the practical Hattie leaning from a casement, wholly absorbed in the beauty of the flower she was bending from its stem. But it was a good portrait. Every one recognized it, and Hattie was considered a beauty from that time on.

Our luncheon we served in recess on a sort of wooden conduit, or aqueduct, into which the tin water-pipes apparently conveyed the water from the 'gutters' of the schoolhouse roof. It was the only extraneous object in the whole dreary expanse of yellow clay, badly guttered by the rains, that formed the playground for the children of two schools, the Intermediate and the Primary, which was on the east side of the same building. As the entrances were on the south side and the playground on the north, the build-

ers apparently at that time had not been instructed as to the value of sunshine in the development of children.

This aqueduct, which was about two feet from the ground, rested on wooden supports, and extended quite across the yard to a high wooden fence through which it disappeared. I don't remember ever seeing a child walk on this aqueduct, about eight or ten inches wide, so I think that the supports must have been rather slight. They looked insecure. After a heavy rain, the newly washed out gullies furnished a secondary means of enjoyment, with their slippery banks of wet clay, and sometimes pools of yellow water still remaining in the messy bed of the late stream, over which we rashly jumped. Otherwise there was nothing for the amusement of the children but the use of their lungs. And that exercise went on continuously with ceaseless, and, to me, meaningless motions of legs and arms.

We never paid any attention to these other children, simply because we were not interested in them. Personally I hated the racket and confusion, but we played in one special corner of the yard, and for some reason our claim was seldom invaded. Nicknames were not unusual among the children, but why 'Proudcat' was chosen for me I never knew. I was certainly never 'catty,' and it was terror rather than pride that over-

whelmed me when occasionally brought into close contact with these vigorous, bellowing children.

None of them attracted me except a brother and sister who were both very good-looking and very clean. Moreover, they lived not very far from us, though on another street, and I knew them slightly, so they were at least not strange to me. But they had playmates of their own, so I did not go for companionship outside of Marjorie's 'family,' which I was invited to join the first day I went to the Intermediate. Marjorie always has lived on Nantucket, though her husband came from 'away.' And in all these long and busy years, whenever I see Marjorie on the street or meet her in the shops, I feel a little flush of the old confidence and liking that began when I was a child, and Marjorie, the biggest girl in school, was our play mother.

After all we did not go to live with Grandfather in Edgartown, though in the first loneliness of her widowhood, Mother's thoughts had naturally turned back to her own home. Her interests there had never lost their freshness during the few periods, of two years each, that she had spent on Nantucket between the long voyages; besides, there was always much visiting between the families. But in spite of the fact that Mother said that if she 'had to live on an island she preferred her own,' she didn't go back to live on Martha's Vineyard.

Mother's only sister had married and was living in New London. She was never very strong, and had been a great pet of Mother's, since their mother had died when my aunt was only a little girl. She had two young children, about the ages of Brother and me, and she was expecting another. Uncle had built rather a fine house in a most attractive location, and was making the place beautiful with trees and shrubs and gardens. My aunt had been having quite too much care, so it was suggested that Mother should go to live with her sister and take charge of the housekeeping, and with Brother and me 'make one family.'

Susan was still with us, so we took her along, partly because Mother thought that she might be useful, especially with the care of the children, and partly because she always felt a sort of responsibility for Susan, who required rather careful handling. Susan's father was a Frenchman, and a genius, especially in his cabinet-making, which was his regular business. But he was temperamental, in the way of geniuses, and the old Doctor, for whom he did much work, told me that sometimes, when a piece of work was completed, some perhaps imagined imperfection would so irritate him that he would seize an axe and hack the thing to pieces.

I have always felt a secret sympathy with him in this little act of self-expression, but in a New

England family like ours, it simply wasn't done! Neither self-control nor English thrift could be so outraged.

On Susan's mother's side — and she was of good brainy, Nantucket stock — there was an inherited unusual streak. So it was not strange that Susan should show some marked idiosyncrasies. But she was canny, and her devotion to our family was deep and lasting. Susan did housework for people, 'not because she had to, but because she had an active temperament.' And perhaps the activity of her temperament was the reason that her little grandmother, whom I once went to see with Susan, brought her to Mother, asking Mother to take her as nursemaid for Brother, then a baby. After the next five years' voyage, when Mother was again in Nantucket, Susan was with her for the two years of Father's stay on shore, during which I was born. And for a third time she came to us after the last voyage and now was to go to New London with us.

Once arrived in New London, Susan became so excited by the new environment that even Mother could not spare the time and strength to cope with Susan's temperamental outbursts, so she was sent to visit a relative. I have a dim idea that it was a brother who was the keeper of a lighthouse near New London.

Meantime the experiment of 'making one

family' with two sets of children who refused to be standardized, even if the three parents could have met the requirements, was not found to be satisfactory. And so, after the baby was born, for whose coming Mother had waited, as soon as my aunt's health was far enough established for Mother to be willing to leave her, we came back to Nantucket, bringing Susan with us. In spite of my uncle's generosity and the affection between the sisters, Mother felt the wisdom of bringing up her children in their own home, where, even if the living was far simpler than in New London, there was at least sea-room for Mother to maneuver her ship and its little crew according to her own chart and compass.

Mother did not keep Susan with us long after we came home, but we saw her frequently, as she lived for a good many years with our friends. Occasional attempts were made to 'train' Susan, as when one of her employers suggested that she should address the daughter of the house — a girl of my own age — as 'Miss Maria.' 'All right,' said Susan, 'if she'll call me Miss Susan.'

Finally Susan came back to us and stayed through the last years of my stepfather's life. And even then, though getting along in years, Susan was always, like many other women before and since, expecting the Prince to arrive, and delighted in sizing up new people, especially

men, who represented the 'might have been.' When Dr. Grover, then the 'new physician,' came to the house one day, Susan seized a broom and ran out and swept the front steps assiduously until he appeared. She took a good look at him and said to us with glee, 'He's got big black eyes, just like mine!' Large dark eyes he did have, but otherwise they bore no resemblance to the piercing blackness of Susan's, so startling in her chalk-white face.

One of my friends from 'away' brought her English husband to Nantucket on their wedding journey, and they stayed with us for a short time. Susan was no waitress, but she hovered about in the dining-room whenever it was possible. She admired Brother extremely, but she 'couldn't decide whether she would rather have Mr. Starbuck or Mr. Fletcher for a husband, but there was nothing fictitious about Mr. Fletcher.' And there really wasn't anything 'fictitious' about this English visitor. He was a lovely fellow, a lawyer like Brother, with whom he had much in common outside their profession. We all enjoyed the visit, which he called the 'epitome of a novel' in writing to Mother afterward. Certain Americans who have lived much in England call Nantucket 'the step between,' and in those days there was just enough of a jolt to provide the material for the 'novel.'

Susan was an almost continuous talker, and

one day, when I was busy in the kitchen, she said impatiently, 'You ain't talking much!'

'Oh, yes,' I answered, 'I've talked a good deal.'

'Well,' she admitted, 'you do talk to a certain extent, and then you don't say any more. That's like your own father, but the cant of your attitude, that's like your mother.'

The last time Susan 'helped' in our house, she had acquired a little house of her own, to which she returned each night with pride and joy in her independence. 'I like to make my fire, and then sit down in my own grandmother's rocking-chair and renovate my brains.' To us Susan's brains never seemed to need renovating.

I didn't regret Susan's leaving us when I was a child, for though we were on friendly terms, I was still young enough to require some help in dressing, and I did so hate to be pulled and pawed or indeed to be touched at all except by my very own. But as a woman grown, I was glad to have Susan with us again.

This childish sensitiveness, or independence, or whatever it is now called, showed itself early in my case, for I have been told lately that at the age of three, when Mother had left a young girl as housekeeper to look out for us in her absence, and to put me to bed at the proper time, I had insisted upon going to my room alone, closing the door, and getting ready for bed myself. Then I would open the door and signify that the young

woman might enter, and, I suppose, put me into the bed, which was probably too high for me to clamber in myself.

Quite recently an old friend was recalling the days of our extreme youth when she came each year to visit her aunt in Pleasant Street. We were old enough then to be familiar with the purchasing power of pennies. Millie and Eliza, who lived in Pleasant Street, and Emily, the visitor, and I, rarely had pennies at the same time, but the whole bunch would go, with even one penny, around the corner to Quaker John Hosier's little grocery store on Main Street and joyously choose a pickle, olive green in color, out of a cask where they were kept in brine that looked surprisingly like sea-water, owing to the bubbly scum that floated on the surface of the opaque liquid. The pickle was anywhere from seven to nine inches long, and about two inches in diameter. Each child in turn took a bite, but when it came to me, Emily said that I always insisted upon taking my bite from the unbitten end. Because of this predilection for the unbitten end, Life has required of me, through these decades, more faith, more courage, often, in fact, more Christianity, than, to the casual observer, the importance of the occasion would have seemed to require.

Often, too, there has been no unbitten end! Ah, those have been times of test!

Not long after Father's return, Grandmother, who was getting quite too old and infirm to keep house by herself, came to stay with us until she could find the right place to board. And that was finally secured with a family who lived not far from us in a pleasant, old-style house built to face due south, as was common for houses of that period, without the slightest reference to the relation the entrance bore to the street, on which the house often necessarily turned its back in order to achieve the desired result — the enjoyment of the greatest amount of sunshine.

The angle of the kitchen end of this house almost touched the street-front fence, and to get to the front door, one entered the gate south of the kitchen, passed the back door, the big pump that stood in the yard, and the corner of the living-room, whose front windows faced the side of Mill Hill. It is true the end windows had a view of the street, but the sunshine that flooded the living-room, parlor, and bedrooms was far more important than anything else.

In this house Grandmother was cared for and made comfortable and happy until her death. I think that must have occurred soon after Father's, but I am very vague about it. I seem to remember that the funeral was from our house, but I am not sure. It was without doubt a Quaker funeral, perhaps silent, as Grandmother was a member of the Friends' Meeting on Fair Street.

Grandmother must have been much older than Aunt Phebe, and she wasn't quite so good-looking, but I remember the bright glance of her eye, and the unusual quality of her speaking voice, like that of some other members of the family — Aunt Maria, for instance, Father's sister, who lived in the house at the head of Starbuck's Court. It faced on Pleasant Street, and the Macy sisters, who lived in the next house, used to tell me that they loved even to hear Aunt Maria scold the children, her voice was so beautiful.

I don't remember going 'down the lane,' green and rutted, to Grandmother's very many times before she came to us. Only one day stands out clearly, a gray, raw day. I wanted to go out to play with Clara, who lived 'across the Isthmus,' and Grandmother thought that I wasn't dressed warmly enough, so she opened the lowest drawer in a wonderful old secretary and, taking out a little white silk shawl, the kind that Quakers wore over the muslin kerchief, she pinned it around my shoulders and I started across the Isthmus with Clara, whose house faced on Mill Street.

I never knew just why the path leading diagonally from Grandmother's place to Clara's gate on Mill Street was called the 'Isthmus,' except that the Isthmus of Panama was familiarly known to many Nantucketers, men and women,

chiefly as a short cut to California, and so, naturally enough, the name might have been applied to this short cut from Starbuck's Court to Mill Street.

When Grandmother broke up housekeeping, that precious old secretary was given by Aunt Maria to one of her friends. Years after we tried to trace it, but it was too late.

When we finally were settled once more in the old house after our experience in New London, Grandmother gone and Aunt Maria moved away, Mother bravely began life over with her two children. Brother went to the high school, and I went to the Coffin School.

Mother was a great favorite in the Congregational Church, to which, as to the Howard Society in which she was interested, she gave generously of her time and her substance. The older ladies of the Church were very fond of Mother, who was in their opinion a 'circumspect' young widow, devoted to her home and children in the good old New England fashion. It is true that more than one mother of unmarried sons had plans for ending Mother's widowhood, and occasionally Mother was lured into contact with some one's bachelor or widower brother when we visited friends off-island. But Mother kept on her job as she saw it. As a friend and neighbor she was a great success. She was admired by many, and if fewer persons loved her, it was

always with intensity. She used to say, 'Be polite and kind to every one, but have few intimates.' She couldn't endure dullness, but, on the other hand, she must 'approve' a person or her liking was withheld, whatever might be their gifts of wit or wisdom. She would have none of them. Naturally under such conditions, 'intimates' had to be few. But Mother was quite satisfied. If she really liked a person, you might be sure, as Brother said, that that person was worth while.

There wasn't much money when everything was settled up after Father's death. The land out of town was sold, and the cow and the wagon and harnesses and a great quantity of hay that was stored in the barn out at the lots. Matthew Starbuck bought the hay at a good price, and he was of great service to Mother in many ways, giving her good advice about all sorts of matters. For Mother, born genius as she was in some directions, was a babe in arms as to business matters. There was very little at that time that a woman like Mother could do to earn money, except to teach, which was out of the question, or open a shop, which would soon have reduced us to beggary, because of Mother's habit of giving things away; and 'boarders' would have been equally disastrous. But with a house to keep for a 'home,' and Mother was always strong for the home, and with two young children for

whom she had the average New-Englander's ambitions, none of these careers offered any solution of her problem.

Susan had gone. But even with all the work for the house and children, except for the help of a chore-woman (and, oh for the touch of the chore-woman's hand, and the welcome sound of her voice!) Mother thought that she might do a little sewing for her friends. But I remember only one incident along that line. One of the neighbors wanted in a great hurry a lace waist for some occasion, and Mother made it for her. It was of white net — I think they called it 'wash blond.' It was puffed from the high neck to the waist-line, in little puffs about an inch and a half wide. It was much admired. I'm not sure that the making was a business arrangement, but I think that it was, and if not, it ought to have been: the neighbor had 'means.' But Mother always was doing things like that for people, and I was brought up to do the same.

CHAPTER IV

CHILDHOOD

I COULDN'T have been more than eight years old when I had a chance to form impressions of grown-ups, some of which I always retained.

Eliza and I were very much attached to an old ex-slave, Aunt Lucy Cooper. There was a little bunch of grapes branded on her forehead just above her eyebrows. She wore a turban, and she had a lovely soft voice and was gentle in her ways, and she and her little house were immaculately clean.

We used to go often to see her in Guinea, for that was what the portion of the town was called where the colored people have always lived. Pleasant Street runs through it to Atlantic Avenue, the old South Shore road. Aunt Lucy's house was on one of the little lanes that wandered off from Pleasant Street up toward the Mill.

When she died, we were for a time inconsolable, and one day, when we had been underfoot long enough even for Mother's patience and love of children, for she was wonderfully patient with us all, she said, 'If you care so much for Aunt Lucy Cooper, why don't you go and get money enough from her other friends to put up a gravestone for her!'

It was an inspiration. We were thrilled. This was something entirely new and promising excitement enough. If we had only known it, some of our pleasing sensations were of the nature of that complacency that seems to be the earthly reward for a brand-new philanthropic chore requiring no sacrifice on our part.

Eliza's parents approved the undertaking and her father fitted us out with paper and pencil, and generously promised to make up any deficiency in the amount required for a stone to match that of Aunt Lucy's husband, dead long ago.

With the slender equipment needed, we sallied forth into the unknown. But we soon began to learn.

One man said that he had all he could do to attend to the living. He had nothing to spare for the dead. When we reported this incident, our parents laughed, but made no comment.

As a rule Nantucketers were friendly toward the colored people. What is said to be the first publication in New England advocating abolition was written in Nantucket by a Quaker preacher, Elihu Coleman, whose wife was Deborah Starbuck, who lived on the Hosier farm on the shore of Hummock Pond. In any case, Nantucket was from the first known to be strongly in favor of abolition, and many ex-slaves found a happy home in Guinea. The colored children attended the town schools with

the whites, and in my day even the Coffin School; and the whole colored population was treated with the respect it merited. Some of the men went to sea, rarely, however, rising to the command of a ship; in fact, I never happened to hear of more than one. His portrait is in the Historical Museum. I came along just too late to know much about the whaling and merchant service, anyway, at first hand. But I do know what good cooks some of these colored women were. And I know how kind to children the men were, for they were often employed by our friends who had horses and other live stock to be looked out for.

Of course we went first to the people we knew and whom we knew to be friends of Aunt Lucy, for she was well known in the town. Some persons laughed a little at the two anxious young solicitors for a cause so sentimental, but they were on the whole satisfactory, and cheerfully signed their names on our paper and gave us an offering.

Now Millie's grandfather was one of the richest men in Nantucket and our hopes were high as we called at his house. He was a kindly old gentleman, and he received us courteously enough, took our paper, wrote the word 'Cash,' and gave us a silver quarter. That word 'Cash' bothered us, we knew people by the name of Cash, but it wasn't Millie's grandfather's name, and his small contribution was a keen disappointment.

However, in the course of the day we found that other people wrote 'Cash,' and it was gradually borne in upon us that 'Cash' was a sort of covert, or, as we should have said, a fence, behind which, for some unknown reason, people wished to hide. Of course there could be many reasons for this strange thing. It was usually done when the sum contributed was rather small for our expectations of the giver. It was all very interesting, but tiresome. We soon became no respecters of intimately known persons; we just 'canvassed,' and we called everywhere. Almost every one knew who we were even if we didn't know them, and we finally gathered in about eighteen dollars. Eliza's father attended to getting the stone and having it set; and, as he had promised, he paid the extra amount required, about six dollars, I think, and we rejoiced that Aunt Lucy had a tombstone to match that of her husband whom we had not had the pleasure of knowing, since he had died before we were old enough to make friends in Guinea.

One of these friends was Emma, a big girl, very black, and when I was a little girl, I thought she looked dangerous. One day she stopped me on the street and told me that I was proud of the embroidered ruffles on my petticoats. I really had never given much thought to the subject. I wore what Mother put on me, and this accusation terrified me. Perhaps if I was 'proud,' I

should die suddenly in my tracks, like a little girl in my favorite story-book, an English work with illustrations. Each little girl had some leading characteristic which finished her up for good or bad, and there was a picture showing how it was done. And the 'Vain Girl' dropped dead as she was admiring herself in the mirror. I thought often of the little Vain Girl when I grew old enough to see my full-length frame, clad in party clothes, reflected in the long mirror.

Time went on, as it has a way of doing, and the last time I saw Emma, she came to my house on some errand. We sat down in the kitchen, for she seemed to me tired, and we went the whole length of Pleasant Street, from Guinea to Main Street, talking over the people who had lived in each house, most of whose funerals I had attended. Emma had had her favorites among them, and for some of them she had a strong affection. When she went, she said, 'Oh, I've had such a good time! It's better than a Christmas card!'

During the Spanish War, Mrs. Sampson Pompey, of Guinea, was on some committee with me, so I saw her quite frequently for a while. At that time one of my friends had in his employ a sort of butler-valet: very good-looking, gracefully efficient beyond words, with a voice that would pull your heart through your ribs, and English that Walter Pater might have dictated.

He also spoke French fluently. He had been educated for a Roman Catholic priest, but he was first known in America as a porter on a Pullman car. He had been given the name of Miles by some previous English employer. But, alas, his skin was dark, for he was a native of Martinique. The poor fellow was lonely. The Irish maids of the household — of his own communion too — would have none of him. To them he was a 'nigger.' So Mrs. William appealed to me. Didn't I know any nice colored person whom Miles might find friendly and congenial? I certainly did. I knew Mrs. Sampson Pompey, gentle and dignified, with high-school education, and some remnant of the French she studied there. But I said that I should not dream of sending Miles to her house without asking her permission, and I would see her about it. 'Let me go with you,' said Mrs. William. So we went.

Mrs. Pompey was simple, dignified, courteous. She said: 'My father always told me to go with the best, or none. From what you and Mrs. William say of Mr. Miles, I think that I should be happy to have him call.'

So one summer evening Miles appeared. He was clad in immaculate white flannels, white shoes, straw hat, and, a final touch of genius, a red necktie. Anything more stunning never came around by the little path to the kitchen door.

I gave him an envelope addressed to Mrs.

Sampson Pompey, enclosing my own visiting card bearing the legend, 'Introducing Mr. Charles Miles.'

A pleasant friendship was formed, but Miles's real interest was given to a very old colored woman who lived in the house next to the Pompeys. She had lived among our friends all her life, but had in her old age retired to a little home of her own. And Miles had a room there while his employers were building a house for themselves in town. They are all gone now from Guinea. I should like once more to hear Sampson Pompey's clear sweet whistling in the early morning as he passed the house. He was a huge fellow. He had been boat-steerer on my stepfather's ship at one time.

While we were still little girls, there was a literally agonizing period suggestive of the present bobbed-hair craze, when all the little girls had their hair cut. Thick, smooth pigtails and long, flowing curls were alike sacrificed to Mr. Crawford's shears. It's a horrid sound made by the shearing; I can hear it now.

Our hair was cut to about the nape of the neck, and each night those whose hair didn't naturally curl had to have the hair done up in little cotton strips or in tea-leads. We haunted the grocery stores for 'tea-lead,' for, though it hurt more than cloth, it took less time; and being 'done up' was a distinctly boring experience, enlivened oc-

casionally by nervous outbursts at the clumsiness of the doer-up, sometimes our mothers, sometimes older sisters. Mother had reluctantly allowed me to have my beautiful hair cut, since it was one of the infrequent occasions when I wanted something so much that it was a serious matter to me, and Mother was a wise woman. Moreover, I was really getting to be rather a big girl for the long curls so loved by Mother.

The 'young ladies' at that time were wearing waterfalls, little cushions of hair at the back of the head near the top, that being smarter than lower down toward the neck where coils had been worn. Waterfall curls were an elaboration of this fashion. They were usually detachable. They were fastened together at the top and were frequently curled over a stick; the best way of retaining the curl was said to be by boiling. As Mother never altered her style of dressing her hair, and as I was 'done up' at night, I had no personal experiences of these precursors of permanent wave appliances. But I never liked that idea of *cooking* hair. It associated in the imagination two subjects in a juxtaposition that was against nature. Eliza's hair was dark and thick and straight, and she cheerfully endured either rags or tea-leads for the added glory of curls as a frame to her handsome face.

My hair, abundant also, was very light, almost flaxen, with a warm yellowish tone; and before

being cut, it was literally curled by my mother, for Nature intended no such thing. But Nature was no match for Mother. Mother used to take a lock of the soft fine hair, wet it and wind it around her forefinger, and produce a curl.

When I went to dancing school, a bit of sugar was added to the water to insure the retention of the graceful curl, and when there was an exhibition, and I took part in 'fancy dances' performed by a group of little girls, Mother used to take the proper implements and make sure that the anteroom contained a proper receptacle for water, and my hair was freshly curled between the acts if necessary.

Mr. Crawford was the children's friend as well as their barber. He was an ex-slave, but as white as most of us were. He had escaped from the South, I think during the war, and prospering up North, he had returned, posing as a Southern planter, and had been able to buy his wife's daughter and bring her home to her mother in Nantucket. He was a preacher as well as barber. Sunday afternoons he always preached at the asylum, now 'Our Island Home.' He was much respected in the town, and when he died he left a place in the community, as in Guinea, that has never been filled.

The colored people that we knew in Guinea were a cheerful lot, not boisterous, but apparently quite happy; all but one — and we never knew

him, but we had been told that he often said that he would gladly be skinned if he could only be white. He was a violinist, and he was so anxious to be with white people that he would offer to play without pay at balls and at parties in private houses.

We knew women later on who as girls had danced to his playing in some of the larger houses with folding-rooms. But in these houses I am sure that he did not play without generous remuneration. He left the Island before our time for visiting in Guinea, as did also a young minister, said to be talented and good, whose sisters we knew afterward as among the best of cooks, and with the gentle, dignified manners of our earlier acquaintances.

Then there was Minnie, who didn't live in Guinea, and whom we saw first at school. She also was gentle, simple, and kindly, and to us seemed almost grown up. Her hair, which I was able to observe at close range, since she sat directly in front of me, was curled, or, perhaps I might say, her hair was curls!

Some of my playmates had dolls with hair that was real if not indigenous. I didn't at that time happen to own one thus adorned, but I managed to get even closer to Nature, for I finally plucked up courage to ask Minnie for one of her curls. At first she hesitated, I suppose from surprise, but I was afraid that I had offended her, that she per-

haps realized that it was because her curls were so small and tight and glossy, so exactly right for a doll, that her dignity was affronted.

But next day she brought me about three inches of curl that would stand alone. I applied it with a bit of wax to my doll's china head, just behind one ear. That style of wearing the hair was most coquettish. We adopted it ourselves several years later, but some way this particular curl of which I was so proud did not lend itself to coquetry. It refused even a superficial intimacy with the china curls. The illusion was incomplete.

As for Mother, she didn't fancy the curl at all, and suddenly it disappeared. So did Minnie, for that matter, and I didn't see her again, until the little curls had developed into masses of hair that was quite too white for the head of any china doll, and Minnie herself was nearing the end of a long, hard road — gentle and dignified to the last.

Eliza's grandparents, who lived next door to her own house, were among the more prominent abolitionists of Nantucket. Moses Joy told me that his grandfather David Joy brought Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth to Nantucket. Sojourner was said to be a most eloquent speaker. She was billeted with these two Friends in one of the finest houses of the town, where all the comforts of life were to be found, though the personal

habits of the master of the house were tinged with a bit of austerity somewhat beyond what Quakerism required.

After the substantial evening meal, Sojourner took a chair by the fire, and, drawing out a pipe and tobacco pouch, proceeded to make herself comfortable with a smoke.

The Quaker host was shocked. He did not himself smoke.

'Sojourner,' he said gravely, 'when thee gets to Heaven, what will God say when he smells thy breath strong of tobacco?'

'When I goes to Heaven, Massa,' she replied calmly, 'I specs to leave my breff behind!'

I wish that Eliza and I had been old enough to have known Sojourner!

After the Lucy Cooper experience the next philanthropic venture was a fair. The big girls, headed by Millie's older sister, whose set was between us and Eliza's older sister's, were to hold a fair in an unused barn on Pleasant Street. Etta's family had moved into the house on Pine Street where we had gone to Cent School, and there was an unused barn on that place. We had come to know Etta and we liked her very much. We, then, would also hold a fair!

Blind Ann had managed to get a new mission schoolhouse built down Orange Street, near 'the cricks.' A fence was needed and the money had

given out. We would give the proceeds from our fair to Blind Ann for the fence!

Etta, a little older than we and already showing signs of administrative ability, engineered the undertaking, and we astonished our families and covered ourselves with glory by gathering up forty-two dollars, a few dollars more than those older girls had made. A stranger man had wandered in and had given us fifty cents apiece for 'just looking at us.' It seemed to us rather a footless way to spend money, for any one could see us for nothing, and what did anybody want to look at us for, anyway, when it wasn't an exhibition, like dancing-school, or an entertainment on the Athenæum stage? We didn't even have our best clothes on. However, we accepted the gift and joyously turned all our money over to Blind Ann. There was enough to pay for the much-needed fence, which immediately began to enclose the mission school property, and for many years, as we drove past the place on our way to 'Sconset, we never failed to call the attention of our companions to that fence and to tell how it was paid for. Blind Ann did great good with her mission school, which she carried on for several years. After it was discontinued, she married, rather late in life, we thought, a widower who was, like herself, an ardent Baptist, and, also like herself, totally blind. They lived in a cozy little house on Milk Street, which they

kept as neat as a pin. Blind Ann did all the cooking. Her husband had made at least one whaling voyage, and so had learned to use his hands deftly like most seafarers, while he had his sight. And by some miracle he had kept the handiness learned on shipboard and now used his skill in housework. At one time I went there frequently to read to them in the evening. The kerosene lamp was always burning brightly, and it was never smelly, so it must have been thoroughly cleaned each day. There was never any dust on the table or other furniture, no ashes on the stove hearth, nor did Ann, who always sewed while I read, ever drop ravelings or bits of anything on the floor.

They attended church faithfully, and almost every Sunday morning I met them, each on the arm of a devoted neighbor, just at the corner of Pleasant Street, turning into Summer Street to the Baptist Church. They are both gone now, but I often think of them, as I turn that corner Sunday mornings and pass the church they loved and where they were for so long an inspiration to pastor and people. Blind Ann especially is among my earliest recollections of persons outside my family and near relatives. The little mission schoolhouse has been altered into a dwelling-house, but the work of Blind Ann can never be lost.

The poor of Nantucket have usually been well

cared for, but during a brief period of our childhood there was a group of people on the outskirts of the town who used to send their children out with baskets, begging for 'cold pieces.' We had seen these little beggars and watched our mothers as they filled the baskets with good things which could hardly be classed as 'cold pieces.' The delighted faces of the children impressed us. We saw in this form of activity a chance for entertainment. Putting on our dresses wrong side out, and otherwise altering our appearance with sundry little touches, we took baskets and sallied forth. We went to Mary Searle's house. Why, I don't know, except that she was well known, not only to our families, but in the town. She was a Friend, and Quakers who were among our relatives were usually kindly persons quick to respond to any call for help. It is true that this Friend had a reputation for not mincing matters when moved to express herself on any subject, as, for instance, upon entering a room already well filled with guests and hearing the purring voice of an interminable talker, she fixed her bright eyes upon the rather soggy offender and remarked affably, 'Well, Cousin Nabby, I see thee's busy uttering thy usual platitudes.'

If Mary Searle was not hampered by any 'relationary' claims of courtesy, she was not more tolerant toward 'off-islanders.' An Italian countess had arrived at Nantucket to visit some in-

laws. Mary's daughter was asked to meet her. During her absence a friend called and inquired for her. 'She's gone to see that foreign woman,' said Mary. 'Caro always did have low tastes.' However, as people always laughed when they told such things about this lady, we were not intimidated, and went boldly to the front door and rapped with our knuckles, since at that time many of the older houses had neither knockers nor bells. Mary Searle herself opened the door. We whined for 'cold pieces.' She did not recognize us, and telling us to wait she went through the long hall, and soon returned with two large sections of mince pie, five tomatoes, and a dime for each of us. Eliza at once perceived some difference in the size of the two pieces of pie, and reaching for the larger one said calmly, 'I'll take this piece.' 'No,' said Mary Searle, 'I shall give that to thy friend. Thee is selfish.' She put the tomatoes into Eliza's basket and closed the door. We sat down on the lowest step with our ill-gotten gains, and Eliza proceeded to divide the tomatoes. She carefully inspected them and gave me two, matching the size of each pair as nearly as possible. She then broke the odd one in halves, giving me one part and throwing the other away. She didn't like tomatoes. I never understood her mental process on that occasion, and I don't believe she had any. Division was a mathematical proposition. She understood that,

and she performed the operation with perfect accuracy. I had my share exactly. There was nothing to complain of, and I never thought of complaining.

When we, it is true with some misgivings, retailed this interesting experience to our respective families, our clothing was at once properly arranged and we were sent back instanter to return those dimes and explain and apologize to Mary Searle. Strange to say, we did not receive the scolding for which we had braced ourselves. Like our mothers, she seemed unusually reserved. Afterward we had a suspicion that she laughed about it with our parents. But we never took that indefinable attitude toward her that many persons seemed to have. We regarded her as a generous and high-minded person. She won our approval for all time.

Eliza's father had two horses, a draught horse and a driving horse, but though the latter was no racer like Bradlee's Orion, Eliza was not allowed to drive him. We had only 'a' horse. Stepfather, like all retired seafarers, and most stay-at-homes for that matter, loved a cruise — pronounced 'cruce,' remember. A Nantucket box-wagon was the favorite vehicle, if there was but one, as in our case. When the women of the family favored driving, or, less frequently, enjoyed a mild 'cruce,' a buggy or a carryall was added to the equipment. Mother cared for neither of these

forms of entertainment. As for driving, a horse like Orion, with a driver like Bradlee, might occasionally be enjoyed; otherwise the 'hack' was called for a party, a funeral, or to take her to the boat when she went 'off.' No strange horse nor carryall nor hireling driver could be trusted, and driving for pleasure missed its mark when offered to her. 'No,' she would say, 'I don't want to go out of town. Pleasant Street is country enough for me.' As for cruising, 'No!' 'Beach sand does not improve lemon pie for me,' she said when a friend had prevailed upon her to try a shore-tea just once.

CHAPTER V

THE THOUSAND-YEAR BOX

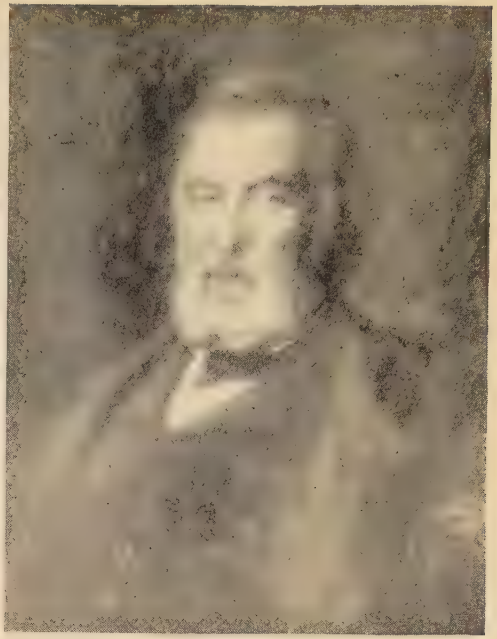
BESIDES a barn, almost every one had somewhere on the premises a little 'shop,' in which were kept all sorts of tools, and odds and ends of material to be used in minor repairs and alterations about the house. It was before the days of manual training schools; and doors that wouldn't shut, drawers that wouldn't open, windows that would do neither, sewing-machines that wouldn't go, fastenings of closet doors that wouldn't stay — all these little annoyances were attended to by members of the family with the means provided by the shop. As for improvements, everything from a window-wedge to a flower stand, or a set of bookshelves, indeed, anything short of a new roof or an additional wing on the house, could be brought forth from the little shop. There was usually a small cylinder stove among its scant furnishings, useful for melting the evil-smelling glue necessary in certain repairs. Moreover, it could be fed with the shavings and general refuse of the shop. Also the little stove in cold weather converted the shop into a desirable smoking-room, and much fruitful meditation as well as much unfruitful discussion went on about the little, sometimes red-hot cylinder.

Under the work bench was the 'thousand-year box.' We had one, and though we did not have a shop in the yard, we had a shop-chamber in the house that not only answered the same purpose, but as time went on, a great many others.

Writing lately to a great-great-granddaughter of the Honorable Walter Folger, to whom our shop-chamber belonged in the days when he and his sons wove in it the cloth for their own wearing, I asked if she still had the copper bookplate that her mother found in her grandfather's thousand-year box. She replied that she had the bookplate, but that she didn't know what a 'thousand-year box' was. That seemed strange, for the heavy wooden box, about the size of a steamer trunk, though usually much deeper, used to be as much a necessity for good housekeeping as the washtubs, not 'laundry tubs,' often kept in the same place with it, the shop or the barn.

But after all she was three 'greats,' at least, removed from those days when hardware shops were few and perhaps far away, when there was no plumber at the other end of the telephone, and no telephone with any end, and the need was immediate, and recourse was had to this treasure chest, the thousand-year box. It was an institution, passed down through successive generations, each of which added its quota to the contents. It was the receptacle for all small

HON. WALTER FOLGER



ELMA'S FATHER

articles of metal, discards of the household, for which there was no immediate need, but which suggested to a lively imagination or to an experienced mind a variety of uses to which they might be put if one lived long enough. There were brass knobs, no two alike, odd locks, odder keys, parts of drawer handles, bolts, rings, hooks and eyes for closet doors, and brass buttons for the same, even door knockers, bearing the names of those who could no longer respond to the sound of their special summons, for no two knockers ever struck the same note.

Then there were, perhaps, handmade copper hinges from some old sea chest, split up for firewood to 'get it out of the way.' A collection of sea-chest hinges would be interesting. Some of our copper ones were nine or ten inches long, and of a nice design, too, and some of them were just two halves of a lozenge about six inches in diameter, roughly cut out as if with shears. There were latches as well as hinges, and blades of steel knives with rounded ends for the better conveyance of peas or custard pie to the expectant lips, but minus the handles of whale ivory, or bone, though whale-ivory umbrella handles or tops of walking sticks might be found; and there would be bowls of pewter spoons or their detached handles, and innumerable bits of ingenious devices for the comfort and convenience of the housewife. And besides these odds

and ends from the domestic life of the family, pieces of all shapes of plate, copper, or zinc were saved for the time of need that was sure to come.

Sometimes a sewing-bird could be found with the rest of the 'trash.' I wish that I had our own, which was a dragon, and of bronze, instead of the usual silvery metal. Whether beast or bird, its jaw or beak held the material to be hemmed, and on the crown of its head was a tiny, velvet-covered pincushion, about as big as the end of one's finger. Under the body was a screw that fastened it to the table. They were most convenient for their original purpose, and in time of need could be used for a tack hammer. For this, the dragon was better than the more commonly used bird.

There was often a 'palm' or two in such a collection. It was a band of heavy leather that slipped over the hand and brought the steel thimble without a top, fastened securely in the leather, just at the palm of the hand where great pressure could be brought to bear.

It must have required some strength to sew 'Rooshy duck' with a sail-needle and heavy twine.

Who that has ever heard it can forget the grating sound as the heavy thousand-year box was dragged out into the open, and the rumble and rattle of its contents as it was tipped over on the floor of workshop or woodhouse, in the search

for some particular bolt or hinge? Or if the searcher were a well-grown boy, he would be looking for the pewter and lead and any other metal that could be melted up over the kitchen fire in the three-legged skillet, and then run into wooden moulds for leadies, or for blue-fish drails, if the boys were big enough to heave and haul for the fish off the South Shore.

The thousand-year box was a thing despised by the good housewife, who contemptuously spoke of its contents as 'clutter.' But even she has been known to resort to it surreptitiously, and gingerly turn over its accumulations with a poker, in the hope of finding a special key, or a brass ring, or a lamp bottom of brass, or even of glass. Lamp bottoms and broken candlesticks and sometimes the 'foot' of a preserve dish — many of these last very beautiful in design — were highly prized as supports for pincushions in the days of the thousand-year box.

These little pillars — the smaller size — were surmounted by a ball-shaped cushion, with narrow ribbon tied around to hide the raw edges of the silk covering. The larger ones first had a square piece of wood fitted and glued on to the broken top. On this the cushion was tacked and finished with fringe, usually of silk, sometimes of beads. Lamb's wool was used for filling as needles and pins didn't rust in that as they did in cotton. This process, starting with a bit of

worthless clutter, that is, 'waste,' first converted it into a strictly utilitarian contrivance, and then by a bit of old brocade and a length of left-over fringe, it finally emerged, while still retaining its usefulness, as a thing of beauty; although it was left for a later generation to formulate a theory suggested by these 'blind æsthetic gropings' of their ancestors.

There were not only ordinary pins and needles on these wonderful cushions — oh, the sharp points of those English pins! — but there were also the forerunners of mourning-pins and stick-pins. If a darning-needle, or rather coarse sewing-needle was wounded in the eye or became bent and feeble in body, it was not therefore 'cast as rubbish to the void.' Far from it. It was carefully saved and when several such wrecks had accumulated they were reheaded with black or colored sealing-wax. And weren't they beauties to our childish eyes! These rejuvenated pins were chiefly used in trying the effect of a new arrangement of trimming on 'the winter bonnet,' for in the days of the thousand-year box it took at least three quarters of a yard of expensive silk velvet to make a bonnet that was a bonnet, a head-covering for a lady. And 'the winter bonnet,' 'the summer bonnet,' and 'the second best' for between seasons, appeared with the regularity of the seasons themselves. Like the seasons, they showed minor differences from one

another, in the arrangement of the thread lace, and satin ribbon of the trimming, and the width of the 'cape.' Of course bonnets never went into the thousand-year box. When their end seemed at last unavoidable, inevitable, then covering and trimmings, except the thread lace, went into the piece-bag, the frame of 'millinet' was reluctantly burned. Possibly a length of wire might find its way to its distant relatives in the thousand-year box.

Geologists, historians, colonial story-tellers, and other beings of like groping instincts spend immeasurable periods of time and countless moneys in reconstructing long-lost intervals of creation, evolution, or civilization. Why haven't they ever thought of tipping over a thousand-year box? There it is, contents spread out before you on the woodshed floor, like logomachy letters. The paragraphs and chapters are somewhat mixed, but the material is all there, and the story plain for those who have eyes to see — 'source stuff' like the 'Sewers of Paris.' But at that time we had never heard of the sewers of Paris nor indeed of any other sewers. 'Contamination of drinking water' had not been discovered by our still robust 'nineties' who had thrived on water that had rounded Cape Horn in casks, and was freely used to wash down hardtack that had to be soaked first in order to remove the little beasts that had already eaten their fill.

They must be quick about it, these delvers into the past, if they wish to investigate this lead, for apparently the thousand-year box is becoming extinct. It belongs to the normal leisurely past, when the ring and rattle of its contents were the only sounds that broke the stillness in the little shop. It cannot be kept for sentiment alone. Besides, there's no place for it in an 'apartment of one room and a bath, with all modern improvements.' Even we, my house and I, have no space for many things once valued for use or beauty, or the more precious 'old associations.' Alas, we no longer harbor a thousand-year box! While it was still 'our' house, though already bereft, the contents of the thousand-year box went to help fill the cistern. How we felt our hearts cracking as those long-treasured bits of ivory, glass, and metal, some of which we hadn't seen for years, clinked and splashed as they sank out of sight in the black water. They found many old friends down there below. Once in a while we had to take time to grow into a willingness to let something go. We had to harden our hearts, and say, 'It has served its turn. It has had its day.' And then, the cover lifted, the sound of the splash — and 'Let's think of something else, Mother!' I sometimes say that now. Perhaps she hears.

But if Eliza and I had never felt a need for the help of the thousand-year box, we rather liked

the little shops where they were usually kept. And when the glue pot wasn't on the stove, we enjoyed the pleasant smell 'of the chisel and fresh wood about it,' and the tobacco smoke did not offend us. The many boxes and baskets of unusual shapes, whose contents were unknown to us, seemed to promise unlimited entertainment if we ever had the time for a thorough investigation. We were free to pull over the heaps of shavings for those tightly curled ones of a limited diameter, and sometimes quite long, that we fastened together in a bunch and by some means known to ourselves, secured to the back of our heads in flattering imitation of the waterfall curls worn by the older girls. But once the 'shop' — this time it was the brand-fire new one in Eliza's father's model stableyard — played a part in a real adventure, which might merit the term 'transaction.'

Down on Federal Street just beyond the Athenæum there was a tiny hardware shop, kept by a small, white-faced Quaker gentleman, whose great piercing black eyes seemed to discover in people only the most admirable and lovable traits. We always went there to be weighed, since his scales were said to be the only accurate ones in town. And hundreds of initials of two generations were chalked or penciled on the unpainted walls of the back room of the shop. A short time ago when the Reverend Edward

arrived for his usual vacation, he was grieved to find that the place had become a 'gift shop,' charming it was true, but a coat of green paint had removed from sight the record of his varying weight from his early boyhood! That back-room had always seemed in great confusion, and then we came to realize that all those masses of stuff were 'junk,' and that our gentle friend actually bought junk, and that old iron which could be picked up in the street was junk!

It was a great discovery! Here was a chance for us to improve our own financial situation! And we immediately began the search for nails and cast-off horseshoes, for we had sometimes seen these objects in our walks abroad. But we met with slight success and then all at once we bethought ourselves of the shop, the new shop in the stableyard. So there we went. We found nothing resembling 'old iron' among the many articles and materials lying about. However we reasoned, if old horseshoes brought a price, new ones would surely be readily sold. We gathered up several of these attractive objects and scooped a few handfuls of nails of different sizes, also new, and set out for the Quaker shop, where we disposed of our wares for the enormous sum of forty-two cents. Strange to say, Eliza's father discovered immediately the loss of the horse-shoes, and conducted an investigation which resulted in his reclaiming his property by means

of an explanation and the payment of forty-two cents, the amount of the purchase money. He then made himself whole by extracting from Eliza's keeping the forty-two cents, allowing us only a few pennies for 'commission' on the deal. We were rather disappointed, though the possession of such a sum at that time had seemed almost too good to be true. Upon thinking it over, however, we had not only escaped the scolding by which grown-ups usually expressed any little difference in viewpoint, none of our occupations had been even temporarily interfered with, but we had acquired a commission with no outlay, except of energy, and that didn't count in those days. That seemed rather satisfactory, after all.

We always liked to play at Millie's house, which was just down Pleasant Street, on the upper edge of the neutral territory that separated it from Guinea. Millie's back dooryard was very attractive to us. It was like many others, paved with bricks, always a trifle damp, as the grapevines on the overhead trellises made a roof almost impervious to sunshine, though freely admitting rain. One emerged from this shady, almost mysterious place, into a big flower garden with the usual box-bordered beds, and a summer-house exactly like a bird cage. A broad path led through the middle of the garden to the stable-yard beyond, where there was the best possible

sort of soil for the building of reservoirs and conduits and the final lake. A little seam of yellow clay served to keep the water in sight and actually flowing for minutes. As a rule the shallow streams disappeared immediately into the pulverized quartz of the Nantucket soil. I have been told that this natural filter was what had saved the whole population from being swept off by typhoid or some other epidemic, before the tremendous increase in the summer population made it necessary to turn our attention to sanitation and sewerage; but it was poor soil for our work.

Millie's stable had been unused for a long time, so it only required a good sweeping when Kate, Millie's next older sister, decided to give an entertainment. Our little group was drawn upon for material, as well as Kate's. I was booked for the final tableau, entitled 'Good-night.' Clad in my nightgown with high neck and long sleeves, and holding a lighted candle in one hand, with the other I was about to pull aside a gruesome dark curtain which years afterwards we learned to call a portière. I was told to stand in immovable silence until the curtain went down.

But it stayed up so long, and the audience was so still, that it seemed as if something were expected of me, and I couldn't resist giving it to them. So I gravely said 'Good-night.' It

seemed to be the right thing. The applause was instant and overpowering.

Millie's grandfather lived on Main Street. Her oldest sister had kept house for him since his wife had died. She was lovely to us. We liked to go there. We liked the two flags, too, that draped the wide doorway between the folding-rooms on the sunny side of the house, for according to custom in houses with folding-rooms, the back room was used for the dining-room, and the front for the sitting-room. The back room on the other side of the long hall was often kept, as in this house, for a sort of state dining-room, when there happened to be need of it and its grandeur, for parties, weddings, or the receptions sometimes given for notables who for some reason had made their way down to the Island.

Funerals too, used to fill these big rooms, while the halls were usually packed with men, all standing. It is a curious experience to have attended the funerals of almost every one of these people whom I saw at all the funerals of my youth; first I went with Stepfather and Mother, then, because of Mother's ill health, with Stepfather, then without him, and at last I went when there was no one at home to ask on my return — 'Who was there?' I go more rarely, now.

Barnard, of blessed memory, who had the care of Eliza's father's model stable, and its contents

and accessories, used to get out the spring-cart on stormy mornings and gather up all the children of the neighborhood and take us to school. The cart was two-wheeled, and had sides about two feet high along which heavy ropes were fastened securely, but with a little 'slack' so that they might easily be grasped by the passengers, and so steady them for the jolting over the cobblestones, or the jerking through the ruts and mud of the unpaved streets, of which I never heard a word of complaint. There would often be eight or ten children standing, but bobbing about in these carts. Occasionally one or two boys would hurl themselves aboard and sitting on the floor of the cart at the back, with their legs hanging out, would ride as far as they liked and then jump out, no notice being taken on either side — the legitimate party or the intruders. I've seen pictures of people sitting in chairs in these carts, but I never happened to see them 'in nature.' It was probably a custom dating back before buggies and carryalls made their appearance. Often, however, I have seen men sitting on a board placed across the sides of the cart. On the rare occasions when there was deep snow, the big sleigh would be taken out and, literally smothered in old be-peppered (red pepper, too) buffalo robes, we would enjoy the unusual excitement of a sleigh-ride to school, and after school, perhaps a long way home. Eliza's mother remarked to

mine one day that it seemed hardly worth while to take Barnard's time and give him so much trouble conveying the children to and from school, since he reported that when he drove up for us, we were usually engaged in jumping from the top of the school steps into the deep drifts or heaped-up snow, so high that it was with difficulty that we could emerge without help. We often came home wet from skin out with the snow that had melted down our necks.

Once when this same lady was seriously ill Eliza asked one day 'if she was going to die; and if she was, would she see that father would promise to marry Mary Eliza's mother.' The patient afterwards told Mother that she dated her recovery from that moment.

CHAPTER VI

ÆSTHETIC GROPINGS

I SUPPOSE that young children still feel wholesome thrills for gifts and stockings at Christmas, not having lived long enough to become surfeited with sensations. In my own experience of the joys of life, of which I have had my share, there has never been anything surpassing the delicious feel of a knobby stocking before daylight on Christmas morning. It was fascinating enough on Christmas Eve to lie in my bed in the room just off the sitting-room, and hear the subdued voices of Mother and Aunt Mary Barnard — one of the Macy sisters — as they rustled paper; and sometimes there was a clink of china or the ring of metal; and together with the strained ears were the quickened heart beats at the mystery, the suspense, the certainty of the morrow's delight.

We never had a Christmas Tree at home, and trees in Sunday School were not common; in fact I remember only one at the Methodist Church. Some one took me there on invitation of Mrs. Mitchell, and suddenly my name was called as claimant of a present, which would have remained forever unclaimed if a kind person had not brought it to me where I sat. On that oc-

casion a dear little girl whom I had never seen before 'spoke a piece.' She wore a bright magenta gown. (Some one in the 'Atlantic Monthly' once called magenta 'the unpardonable sin.') But this little girl's dark hair and big dark eyes and milk-white skin would have won pardon for the sinful color, I am sure. I happened to meet the child on the street one day soon afterwards and I stopped and said shyly that at the Christmas Tree she was my 'favorite.' It seemed that I must tell her, because it was true — and a new experience for me who was not often attracted by other children.

For my home Christmas, Mother used to make the most enchanting cotton-wool dolls, with dresses of cotton wadding; the features and hair were marked with ink, and showed to advantage under the little hoods of white, worked with bright-colored worsted, like the hem of the skirt, and the little cape, all of wadding. She would make tiny cotton-wool babies, putting them in cradles made of eggshells. I had the cotton dolls for several years at Christmas, and I looked forward to them with unabated joy until suddenly I didn't have, or miss, or want them. But I remember them with affection, as I do Grandmother's offering of great sticks of candy. They must have been two inches in diameter. I never saw any after Grandmother died, and I never saw any except among my Christmas presents,

but they were not homemade. They were white with red stripes, spirals, like the stripes on barley candy.

My first present of a book was from Brother, Hans Andersen's 'Tales.' It was a wonderful gift, bound in very dark blue cloth. But lest it should not seem joyous enough for little Sister, he had, with unusual thoughtfulness for a boy, gone to Amelia Coffin's and purchased two 'hanks' of worsted — a shell pink and a bright blue, and those were added to the contents of my stocking.

'Amelia' was as well known as 'Harriet' — and long afterwards, as 'Mary F.' and 'Hannah' — only her last name was always added, the others, never. Amelia Coffin sold worsted, knitting- and crochet-needles, 'shell pieces,' pressed seaweeds, and paper dolls. The worsted was our delight. She would take a thick, long skein from a drawer, wind off a yard or two, holding the skein on her wrists, then break the thread of wool, drop the skein in the drawer, wind the bit in her fingers into loops, and with a deft twirl make a loose knot in the middle, and there was the 'hank,' price one penny. We used it for bookmarks, made of cardboard. The favorite design was a book, and the preferred combination of color was maroon for the cover, and yellow for the leaves and tooling. It was worked in cross-stitch, and mounted on ribbon the width of the cardboard, so the knots were concealed. It was

a popular Christmas gift from us to relatives especially, though I remember making one with great care to bestow upon an almost grown-up cousin of Eliza's whom I secretly admired. He seemed always to be well supplied with sugar almonds and things, and I had not learned that pockets were not hygienic receptacles for food.

And now I am reminded of a later use of cardboard. We made crosses of it, cutting first the foundation as large as we chose, then another, one hole smaller, and so on in this fashion until the last tiny strip was just the width between two rows of holes. Each strip as it was cut was glued on top of the next larger, giving the effect of a beveled edge. We used gum arabic, made at home. It was a lovely color, but horrid sticky. This cross was then mounted on a background of black velvet or broadcloth and framed, and, moreover, in many cases it was hung on the wall. It represented patience, perseverance, and when the ends of the cross were cut in points, some degree of æsthetic aspiration, but it was hardly a thing of beauty, especially when it was enclosed in a 'rustic' frame of black walnut; and Mother's good taste firmly declined any such decoration for our cheerful sitting-room.

Later on she did allow, for a very short time, a 'fairy basket' to hang at the end window of the parlor, which looked into the side yard. These fairy baskets were made of cotton cloth, now

called 'muslin.' We took two- or three-yard lengths of the cloth and tore it lengthwise into strips an inch or a trifle more in width, then raveled each edge leaving three threads in the middle. One end of the strip was fastened to something stationary, and it was twisted until when the two ends were brought together, it would curl up in a permanent twist. We made as many of these twists as necessary. A wire was bent into a circle of the required size and the twisted cotton was wound about it for a finish, and the other twists were looped from it in festoons of varying lengths, being caught together about five inches from the lower end and so forming a tassel. A tumbler or bowl or, most often, a shallow glass dish was placed inside to give shape, and the fairy basket was hung in a window by long loops of the twisted cotton. If it happened to be the open season for flies, the fairy basket soon lost its pristine freshness by reason of its attractiveness for the insects. Yards and yards of perfectly good cotton cloth were raveled out for this item in the development of art in the home; but at least, as George Eliot said in 'The Spanish Gypsy,' 'It was good for trade.'

Wax flowers came next, and we all made them. My sister-in-law-to-be even took lessons from some expert who happened to be visiting for a time on Nantucket, and finally achieved a large

bouquet that was thought worthy of being preserved under an expensive glass globe, like a clock. A special variety of blossom, introduced near the end of this epidemic, was small, and of white wax, thickly sprinkled with diamond powder. Anything chillier in the way of decoration cannot be imagined than a slender cross covered with white wax, and laden down with a vine of leaves and flowers of diamond-dusted wax, all mounted on black velvet and framed in black walnut. But many of these works of art were to be seen in the homes where there were young girls with active minds and clever fingers. First the white-and-black combination reduced the gayety of the sitting-room, and then it was removed to the guest room, the region for 'second-best' artistic products.

Picture frames of imitation coral were more cheerful, if less easily kept free from dust. These were made of pasteboard, on which were sewed raisin stems from which the fruit had been carefully removed in preparation, so that the branches were not broken. There was some degree of art in arranging these branches; when that was done the whole structure was dipped in melted wax, colored with cochineal. They were round, oval or rectangular, according to the fancy of the maker, and used for photographs of relatives and friends, which in such a frame lost any attractive suggestion of individuality that

they might originally have possessed. But all these 'crude gropings towards domestic art' were smothered when portières shrouded the narrow doorways of our old-time houses, and be-gloomed them to a greater degree than the wax crosses or even the Rogers groups. Doors were removed from halls, living- and sleeping-rooms, and closets, and great dust covers had to be made of calico to protect these draperies during the Friday sweeping. For in those days a 'bare floor' even when partially concealed by more or less costly rugs, was considered 'poverty-stricken.' Even straw mattings were a makeshift. Carpets firmly nailed down and taken up every spring at housecleaning time, were in general use. But portières raged wildly among the younger people who kept house, or where the elders of a family yielded to the younger members on points of 'taste.' Some elders didn't.

A middle-aged Nantucket woman went to New York to visit an early friend whose apartment was strictly up to date even to doorless rooms, all on one floor, with a family of grown men and women and two maids. And for the first time the guest from Nantucket, whose people had steadily resisted any modernization of their established ways, had her personal experience of portières! Of course this guest bore it, making no comments, adapting herself as she could to the exigencies of the situation. She was well enter-

tained with the sights and sounds of New York, she was feasted and fêted in a charming fashion; and at length she came back to her great house in Nantucket, with its spacious rooms and wide halls and heavy doors with knobs of fluted glass; and with every appearance of having been satiated, she unpacked her trunk, and first hanging everything out 'on the line' for a thorough airing, finally put her clothes away in their proper places, where she could have two hooks apiece for a skirt, and two for a basque or a coat. There were no 'hangers,' but each garment had two loops of tape sewed where they would not stretch any bias seam. When this dear lady was asked by a jocose cousin what she had most missed in New York, she answered readily, 'The privacy of my own room. I got tired of listening and dodging.'

'How did they like your new clothes?' asked another interested relative. 'I didn't wear them,' said the traveler serenely, 'I've brought them home clean, where they can be worn and kept clean.'

CHAPTER VII

EARLY YEARS AND LATER SCHOOLS

In the spring after Brother's graduation from the high school, Mother married Captain James Wyer, our 'Uncle James,' who had, a year or two before, returned from California, where he had gone after the death of his wife. She must have died at about the time of Father's death, for I remember going just once to their house on Orange Street with Father and Mother. Captain Wyer had been a boyhood friend of Father's, and 'Aunt Hattie,' a pretty, delicate woman, was a good friend of Mother's. I liked her because she was so gentle and so pretty.

That day was memorable because it was the only time that I ever saw a Galapagos turtle. He was a huge fellow that Uncle James had brought home from the Galapagos Islands, and he was slowly meandering about the yard, which was cobblestoned, or at least the part nearest the house. There was a green yard beyond, and a white rosebush on the house all in bloom. There was a monkey, too, that seemed to be flitting all over the place. I didn't care for the monkey. We all went out and Uncle James placed me on the turtle's back, or on the ridgepole of his roof, since there didn't seem to be anything that looked

like a 'back' as I had known backs, and held me there while the great creature bumped about over the cobblestones. I have read quite lately that shipmasters 'often brought these turtles from the Galapagos Islands, keeping them for pets; and frequently children rode upon their backs.'

Well, I am one of those children, and to that extent I am an Historical Personage. It is a curious feeling to realize that some trifling experience of one's life should have become of great importance because it happened so long ago that there is slight likelihood of its ever happening again. Of course one can see that for instance, no child could keep a Galapagos turtle in a modern apartment. People who travel are expected to bring home photographs of themselves riding on camels or elephants, but to stay at home and ride on a Galapagos turtle seems an incident of far greater distinction.

There was some talk, after Stepfather took us into his keeping, of going to live in his house on Orange Street, but Mother liked this part of the town near the few remaining relatives of Father's, and where she had now lived long enough to become truly friendly with the neighbors, for some of whom she developed as great affection as was possible for any one outside the family. So gradually the matter was dropped, and we stayed in our own home. Until Stepfather rented his house, when that white rosebush was in

bloom he and I used to go every Sunday morning before church and cut the lovely things. He always carried a shallow rattan basket, the sort known as 'lightship baskets,' but in those days almost any seafaring man could and did make them. Stepfather's were beautifully made. He wasn't as original in his ideas as Father, he always had to have a pattern, but his work, equally accurate with Father's, was more delicately finished. He was a lover of flowers, a born gardener — our Isabella grapes were as fine as any on the Island, and quantities were raised here in those days.

After Mother's marriage we began to attend the Unitarian Church, since Stepfather didn't care to go to any other, and Mother was willing; for many reasons, it seemed to her a wise change. Our next-door neighbor, however, the Quaker preacher, beautiful Narcissa Coffin, was much concerned and warned Mother that she was inviting trouble, for she had had a dream about her that foretold some calamity.

Of course like most people of any fiber at all, we had our ups and downs, but I don't know that any of them could be traced directly to this change of the road. Narcissa, though, did have something of the prophet about her; but in spite of that gift, there was one thing that she didn't know about her own daughter. This young Quaker girl used to keep house for Mother when

she and Stepfather and Brother all happened to be out in the evening; and as soon as the coast was clear, this quiet, well-bred young girl would take out of the pocket of her gown of Quaker drab, a bright grass-green ribbon which she would tie around her neck with long loops and ends in front. Then we would settle down for the evening. She never referred to this bit of decoration, and neither did I; it gave me a certain pleasure, both the process and the result, and I am sure that the latter gave her unspeakable satisfaction. When the family were heard coming in, the ribbon was hastily removed, deftly folded and unobtrusively slipped into her pocket. How she ever arranged about this matter with her Quaker-trained conscience I do not know, any more than I know how Friend James Austin, an Elder of the Meeting, settled it with his about his habit of stopping at Susie's steps whenever she happened to be playing the piano, and take such an interminably long time to tie his Quaker shoe. The neighbors watched him but never inquired. Music was not tolerated by the Friends, so why Susie's steps instead of the next house? Or why not take a look at the shoe-ties before leaving his own house at the other end of the short lane? Or his shop, just two minutes down Main Street?

I myself was quite willing to go to the Unitarian Church and Sunday School. And Aunt

Lydia Macy (who wasn't my aunt except by affection), who used to take my hand from Brother's at the 'North' vestry door, and lead me up the long inclined plane of the floor to the gallery at the back of the room where the little ones had their classes, had become a confirmed invalid. Moreover all my little playmates were in the Unitarian Sunday School, though few of them attended church. But I was always what was called 'a great meetin'er,' so I joyfully joined Eliza, and the pair of us wore out two teachers completely. We liked them too, but they both died. Then we were turned over to a young woman who shed tears over us; she left us too, but she only went 'over North'; finally, we were given to Millie's second older sister, whom I at least was very fond of. She, gentle as she was, 'took a stand.' So Mrs. Kate Starbuck, the superintendent, said that she might choose between us. She said, 'If I've got to have either of them I'll take Mary Eliza.' Of course that choice did not express unqualified admiration, but although I heard her say it, I bore her no grudge; neither did Eliza, who was consigned to the saintly minister who on a drive once with us 'had enjoyed the air.' Whether he actually enjoyed Eliza I do not know. He certainly found her quite enough to deal with all by herself. Lacking the stimulation of each other's society, I suppose we were both somewhat less demon-

strative of the joy that was in us. I do not remember that we did much of anything but 'make remarks.' I think it probable that the remarks sometimes seemed irrelevant to other people, who often were singularly dull in the perception of relations and analogies that were perfectly clear to us. And I dare say that we thought ourselves witty when our elders would apply another term to the 'remarks.' But I know that secretly they were amused. Many times I heard quoted among them Eliza's definition of a miracle, when she was asked for one by the minister. She promptly replied, 'A wonder fried in fat.' It was perfectly true; doughnuts were called 'wonders.' We had eaten enough to know. There was no intended irreverence — I doubt if we had ever heard the word. I suppose the principle underlying most of our remarks was the desire to shock, to get a rise out of our hearers. We had not reached the stage of self-consciousness. So we tripped gaily along until suddenly we would feel the bit, and we had to stop for a reprimand, or, very rarely in my case, a mild punishment. There were more children in Eliza's family, so naturally the discipline had to be a little more strict. Besides Eliza was neither the oldest nor the youngest; both of those positions have their privileges and immunities.

Just before Brother went to Exeter his own Sunday School teacher had married and, of

course, had gone away to live. He had given her a gold pencil for a wedding present. It seemed to me quite a wonderful gift for a boy to make. The very old ladies were still wearing them on the long, fine gold watch chains. Mother said that when she went back to stay with Grandfather during one of the long voyages, Father had just given her one of these pencils, then a new fashion. Hers was four or five inches long, octagonal, beautifully engraved — 'chased' it was called — in fine filigree, a graceful design, and with a large topaz in the top. When Grandfather caught sight of it he said, 'Lois, what's that dangling on your chain? A board nail?' At that time Mother was about twenty-five or twenty-six years old, and all her friends thought that she ought to wear caps. It was customary in some places for married women, and age was not considered. Well, Mother did not argue the matter. She didn't wear caps, either.

Our first dancing school was held in Pantheon Hall on Main Street, and was taught by a young and attractive widow, who was a Nantucket woman. This hall was converted into a photographic gallery, or, as now called, a studio. We all had our tintypes taken there by patient, good-natured Josiah Freeman, and we went often in these changing phases of our youth, and different arrangements of our hair. We had

groups and singles, and we kept on going to that gallery as long as he would consent to pose us. He it was who took that bewitching photograph of Mattie in her costume of 'Daughter of the Regiment,' and thereby diverted me temporarily from my original purpose of becoming an army nurse when I grew up. He also had in the 'show room' an enlarged and beautifully colored photograph of Mattie, in a gilt frame. It was only head and shoulders, the latter just showing through the thin lace-trimmed gown. We gazed upon that portrait for many years with unabated admiration.

In our dancing-school days in the big hall there was, high up against the north wall, a tiny balcony, the only approach to which was an ordinary ladder, and when the fiddler had mounted by this ladder and stepped over the balcony rail, the ladder was removed, and he could and did concentrate on the work in hand. He fiddled and 'called off,' according to the directions of our teacher. There were frequent exhibitions in this hall, as well as 'entertainments' in the Athenæum Hall, where we danced on a stage with real footlights. Mother was always on hand on those occasions, for little daughter was to be carefully cherished and guarded, not to say disciplined, in these days when 'The Child' did not furnish so much copy for the magazines. At one of these exhibitions we danced

a wonderful scarf dance. My gown was pink barége, bought at 'Harriet's,' as soft and beautiful as crêpe georgette, and the scarf of the same material was spangled with gilt paper stars. A new little girl had appeared. She had lately arrived with her parents from the West Coast. Her father, a retired sea captain, had, like most men who could, come home to live for the rest of his life. This shy little girl was very plain and so were her clothes. And she wore on her unbecomingly arranged hair a big Alsatian bow. I don't know how it was attached, but it stood up on its edges on the top of her head with no visible means of support. I had not been attracted to her. I loved beauty, especially beautiful faces. But nobody else was attracted either by this fantastic, shy little creature, so Mother said that I must dance with her. How I hated it! Afterwards we knew each other well, and I found her a pleasant companion in school and out, for our parents were friends also.

Our dancing-teacher had a very good voice and some training, and she sang at her entertainments in the Athenæum. Her material for the stage effects was drawn from among the children that I knew best. Another little girl and I were once the clasp in a 'ring of beauty,' sitting close to the footlights, and trying to make the patent leather tips of our little cloth shoes touch the iron gas-pipe on the floor in front of us. And on

one occasion, arrayed in fine white 'Swiss,' also from 'Harriet's' and trimmed with 'real lace' from the same source, I recited 'Give me three grains of corn, Mother.' I think that it was considered one of the fetching features of that special evening, though years afterwards in recalling some of these incidents, Mother observed that the costume might have been better adapted to the sentiment of the poem.

When I posed on that or some similar occasion as 'The Hunter's Daughter' I was perhaps more suitably dressed in a little costume of Highland plaid and had high, very high boots of the same material, made by Bennett the shoemaker, who made all our shoes for years. In the tableau I was perched (standing position) on a wooden pillar, often used as a desk for lecturers and readers from 'off.' I didn't feel any too secure, but I got some support from the long bow resting on the floor, on which I leaned and steadied myself. That special bow, at least six feet long, hardly seemed a suitable weapon for even the daughter of a Scottish Chief, for it had been brought home in Father's ship from the South Sea Islands. The bow was tipped with black-fish teeth. The arrows were poisoned. They were colored on the points with some yellow substance like paint. However I didn't have to use those. I felt that my position was so precarious, even with the support of the bow, that it was a great relief when the curtain

went down for the last time, and I was posed for the next tableau with those plaid boots firmly planted on the plank floor of the stage. The Hunter Chieftain was now in evidence in a most extraordinary position, as if, with a horn to his lips and in mad pursuit of some one, he had suddenly become petrified. How he maintained that remarkable arrangement of limbs, torso, and head for the time required I can't imagine, any more than how he rearranged himself when the show was over. This Chieftain was the senior local tailor, who also had some dramatic talent. It was always a joy to get back to Mother in the dressing-room, where she never failed to be waiting with the paper bag of cookies; and in another receptacle the inevitable brush and comb, in case my long, docile hair needed recurling.

At a somewhat later period my set were again very much in evidence dramatically. It was long after the band of little girls who had played and gone to school together had disintegrated. Only Fanny Macy remained with me; and now there were added Sharley, Hattie the beauty, Henrietta, Elma, and Maria, who was my age, all the rest except Fanny being two or three years older. A little later on, four or five others joined us, from the various little bunches of congenial spirits separated only by age, each set being depleted by marriages which always meant the going away of the brides, and by infrequent removals of a

family, and happily, by the still more infrequent deaths — these groups gradually lessening naturally gravitated toward a common center or centers.

There was for instance the Shakespeare Club, which a few of us had been asked to join when we were too young to be invariably acceptable to all the members, who were much older and abnormally serious-minded. One of them threatened to withdraw from the club if 'those girls' couldn't behave, meaning particularly Elma and me. Sharley, being more conventionally inclined, though by no means lacking in humor, was more nearly what a member of such a club should be. However, we could behave and we did when appealed to by troubled but friendly leading members.

Perhaps it was the unconscious influence of our later success in the Shakespeare Club (after we took to 'behaving') that inclined us toward producing so many plays for our own pleasure and the enjoyment of appreciative audiences that packed the parlor, or in some cases, the sitting-room, when the dining-room was used for the stage. In the former case, the 'back parlor' of course was the stage. And again of course, our performances were held only in houses where there were folding-rooms. On one or two later occasions, some of the older girls were wheedled into taking part in a real 'public entertainment'

in the Athenæum. And the rest of us went and criticized the actors. Elma won fresh laurels; she was delightful. And Sharley was lovely in a tableau of 'Priscilla's Wedding.' But the activities most cheerfully aided and abetted by our respective families were those dramatics given in private houses. There was no stage other than the floor with the rug removed. The back hall was the greenroom.

I remember clearly only two of these plays, 'Ici On Parle Français,' and 'Poor Pillicoddy.' I think that we gave them both twice. And then I recall some discussion over another of quite a different tone — 'King René's Daughter.' That was of rather a sentimental order. We were not so strong on sentiment as we were on humor and tragedy. We were all New-Englanders, and that is their great combination. We couldn't bring this pretty play into the gaslight, because the rehearsals had brought into prominence a detail that had been overlooked in the first reading of the play. There was a scene calling for a bit of gracious acting, when the hero offers a glass of wine to the leading lady, or *vice versa*, the principle being the same.

At that period there were principles as well as prejudices and politics. The objection was that anybody should offer anybody anything that could be called 'liquor.' It was suggested that footnotes could be introduced on the handmade

programmes explaining the nature of the liquid as beet juice, cranberry juice or whatever; they didn't have to drink it anyway. But the lines said 'wine,' and although the Century Dictionary had not been published, Roget's 'Thesaurus' had, and it offered no harmless synonym for the obnoxious 'wine.' So we reluctantly gave up our plan for broadening our scope of acting by the introduction of a really charming poetical performance, and stuck to Shakespeare and 'Poor Pillicoddy,' on one occasion offering both in the same evening.

Just for variety, Elma and I thought, as an entr'acte between a light comedy and a lighter farce, that we could offer the dagger scene from 'Macbeth,' preceded by Act I, Scene 7. I was Lady Macbeth with a gown of black silk with yards of train, much Spanish lace, a good deal of fur, and all the heavy gold jewelry available. Of course my hair was powdered, although I didn't know whether or not it was required, but it always seemed to us the last touch of grandeur. We don't feel that way now. Mother made Elma's costume. It is true that she had never seen the play any more than we had, or indeed most of the audience. But that was no cause for hesitation on Mother's part. And if Macbeth didn't wear clothes like that, why he ought to have. As for Elma, she would have worn anything that Mother offered, her confidence being

absolute. Elma looked exactly like Benjamin Franklin, as she had a right to, being of the tribe of Abiah Folger, who was Franklin's mother. Her light hair came just to her shoulders like Benjamin's wig, and her great dark eyes, full of intelligence and capable of expressing the whole gamut of emotion, and her strongly built figure all made her a most impressive personage. We took the performance very seriously, and did our tragic best, although during the monologue before Macbeth's entrance with the gory daggers, I did for a moment falter. I happened to catch a glimpse of Elma, *alias* Benjamin Franklin, *alias* Macbeth, smearing the Coffins' best and biggest carving knives with red paint, with the intense concentration with which she always mixed the whitewash for her own back fences. My attention wandered for a second to Benjamin Franklin's head, the distinctly Scotch plaids of an otherwise somewhat nondescript costume, the wearer's entire lack of any infirmity of purpose — and the rest of the troupe standing around her transfixed with admiration for Elma's dexterity; and of course no one of them attending to my recitation on the stage of the preparations I had made for the unique demonstration of hospitality that I hoped was being at that moment offered to our guest. I recovered at once. I had to. The audience was sitting tight, literally, in rapt attention, when the cue was given and Elma entered,

and the scene went on and was finished in a breathless stillness.

We were overwhelmed with applause, that might rightly be reported as 'plaudits.' A cousin of the house, living across the street, had lately come home from New York, where she had seen Charlotte Cushman as Lady Macbeth, and in her opinion I was a neck ahead, though that opinion was couched in more elegant English. Elma also came in for extravagant expressions of approval, although there was one small thorn in her bouquet. The Rev. Louise Baker, at that time the pastor of the North Church, and once our school-teacher, said that Elma reminded her of a wishbone dressed up. This comment was not a reflection on Mother's conception of the costume, but referred rather to Elma's anatomical structure, which did not exactly lend itself to kilts. But those were the words of a carping critic, for Elma's acting was without a flaw, as well as the reciting of her lines in her lovely voice, although there's no denying that those carvers did look less like Scottish daggers than like certain weapons used by South Sea Islanders, and brought home by lucky sailors who had seen them used — and had escaped.

In the fall after we had come home from what Mother thought an unsuccessful attempt to make two sets of children into one har-

monious group, I went to the West Grammar School.

On the last day of the first week, we had our first writing lesson. The neat Payson and Dunton copy books were distributed by certain honored pupils, our pens ready, our inkwells filled, and we were told to sit up and fold our arms, and wait for the order to open the books and take pens. The nice clean book, its lower edge on a line with the lower edge of the desk, was very alluring. Whether I was absent-minded or overcome by curiosity I do not know, but I leaned forward far enough for me, without unfolding my arms, to extend one finger and raise the corner of the book about half an inch.

Instantly the eagle eye of the Master caught the slight movement. He was a good and able man, but hot-tempered to a degree. He told me to 'Come forward.' I went without hesitation, not dreaming of what was about to happen to me. He seized me by the shoulders and shook me violently. The sensation was new and unpleasant. I had never been shaken before. As my head bobbed about, I caught glimpses of the whole school sitting rigid, watching this affair, dreading to wink even, lest another victim should be detected. At last when I had been shaken sufficiently to relieve the nerves of the shaker, I was sent back to my seat. I went as

quietly as I had come. I did not cry. I did not feel humiliated. I did not feel resentment. What had happened was incredible. My mind refused to work. But perhaps my subconsciousness did. I obeyed the directions given. I closed my book when we were told, sat up with folded arms until the signal for dismissal, but when my row fell into line, I remained at my desk. Then I quietly gathered and piled all my books, fastened them with the narrow leather strap and steel buckle, picked up all the odds and ends of my belongings and put them in my pocket or bestowed them otherwhere about my clothing and went out into the hall, put on my 'things,' and without speaking to any one, went home. I went in, calling 'Mother' as usual. I put my books down and, still quietly, said, 'I'm not going to that school any more. That man shook me.' The incredible might happen once, but it would not happen again.

So I went then to the Coffin School. Mr. Meade, who was lame and walked with crutches, was the Principal. His manners, in school at least, were not engaging. He was a stern disciplinarian. The girls feared him because of his unpleasantly sarcastic comments upon their stupidity. The boys objected to his methods of torture. He would order them to 'come forward,' and if they weren't too big he would thrust them under his desk and then from time to time he

would reach under and pull their hair and tweak their ears unmercifully. For the big boys there was an endurance test. A big dictionary was held in one hand, the arm straight out from the shoulder. There seemed to be no time limit, and the strain upon *my* nerves was great, although it was only imaginary, or sympathetic, or some special reaction known to psychologists. Being one of the younger pupils, and brought up to habits of obedience to the higher powers, unless I felt that they went beyond their rights — and I was becoming keen on that subject — I never happened to irritate the sensitive nerves of this semi-invalid.

The first time I taught school, I wondered that any of us had lived to grow up! But my home training in self-control, insisted upon in spite of the indulgences lavished upon me, helped to keep me out of jail, perhaps! I have been told that a woman teacher's best work is done in the first two years. Handicapped then by a nervous system out of gear, it's a losing fight to the end. However, statistics don't bear this out, but then few things have ever seemed to me so misleading as statistics anyway. Personally I've never known the sort of people from whom statistics are drawn — and that might indicate that I have not known many 'average' people, at least intimately. And that is quite true, or was for a long time. For instance, I never knew intimately

an uninteresting woman until I was far beyond thirty years old.

Presently Mr. Meade went away, and in his place came an adorable person, Frank Mildram. Like my brother, he was teaching in the interval between college and law school. Most of us, aged ten or eleven, prostrated ourselves at once before this blue-eyed, blond-haired, quick-tempered young man, who wore immaculate linen, with tiny ruffles up and down his shirt-front, and his cuffs showing just exactly enough beneath his coat sleeves. His manners were lovely, except when his nerves got the better of him — as when he threw a lead pencil at the meekest little girl in school. But Fanny Minturn and I excused that because we knew just how he felt. He was never rough, even with the boys; and we had grown accustomed to that by this time, so this restraint was surprising.

Suddenly three or four really grown-up girls began to swing into school in mid-session for special classes. It was unheard of! They were 'through' anyway! We gazed in wide-eyed admiration as they walked up the aisle, their trains sweeping royally behind them, and took their seats on the settees along the sides of the room until their turn came. Their respective heads were finished off with a plump 'waterfall' at the back — an anomalous term for the perfectly dry, round, or oval cushion of hair, at least

it was hair outside, though there was often a 'rat' underneath. The second older of Millie's four sisters always led the little procession, and one of the girls was Hattie Wise, and I think Alida was another.

Eventually Mr. Mildram and Millie's sister were married. It was a lovely wedding in the big house on Main Street with the American flags still each side of the doorway of the dining-room; and the Unitarian minister, who was a born poet, gave Frank Mildram such a touching 'charge' that it brought tears to the eyes of the older people. Fanny Minturn and I just felt uncomfortable somewhere on our chests. Mr. Mildram as well as Eliza kissed us good-bye, and as we went rather forlornly down the steps, homeward bound, Fanny seized my hand with a painful grip and whispered with a degree of intensity that was new to my experience, 'He *kissed* us!' My appreciation of this favor was certainly as great as Fanny's, but the rack itself would not have made me express it as Fanny did. She was that kind, and a wonderfully interesting personality.

One Christmas, Brother and Harry Dunham were as usual among the crowd coming 'home,' a big crowd in those days, and of people that we knew well. It was bitter cold, and the boat was held here by ice and high wind. Those young

people finally found, at Woods Hole, a man with a small schooner who consented for a price to bring the passengers over. First the young men had to help clear away the ice from decks and rigging, so that it was late afternoon when they started, and pitch dark when near midnight they reached the bar, where a raging sea and a howling northwester lifted them up and bumped them down with such violence that each thump seemed like the last that the little vessel could stand. There was a Methodist minister who prayed continuously, there was one of the old school teachers of the 'boys' who was serene and cheerful, and there was the New Yorker, Charley Goodsell, who lamented over the flowers, frozen stiff, that he was bringing to Lizzie Frank, the most beautiful girl in town, whom he was to marry in the early summer.

Finally they bumped free of the bar, and some way got through the ice to Straight Wharf, where half-frozen and wet with icy water they made for the only light. It happened to be that of the one 'liquor saloon' of my memory, said to be a very 'respectable' place. I remember that groceries were sold there — I saw them in the windows. The proprietor was at least startled when the door burst open at midnight and this crowd of men fairly leaped in with the women following. Their appearance, however, dissipated any fear of an official visit. What he gave the

intruders I don't know. I do know that Mother was still sitting up reading and listening, for though she knew that there was no way of getting to Nantucket, she was impressed with the idea that Brother was coming, so she had kept up the fires, and had the teakettle boiling ready for hot drinks, hot applications or what not. Suddenly after midnight she heard a scuffling and pounding at the front door, and Brother stumbled in, pretty well spent with his experiences as deck-hand on an ice-coated, almost unmanageable vessel in the pitch black night.

Another Christmas the boat landed the passengers at Quidnet. It was daytime however. Henrietta and Brother came to town in a box wagon. Brother was on the front seat with the driver; and Henrietta, on the back seat with another person, crouched in the lee of Brother's back and didn't get the full force of the wind. It was bitter cold and Brother's lips were frozen together so that the blood started as he tried to speak when he got inside the house. But when an Islander starts to come home, he's coming home unless he dies on the way. 'A dead whale or a stove boat' is the savor in the salt of the Island-born.

From the Coffin School we entered the High School. Sharley and I did not stay to graduate. When Elma's class went out, we went too.

Sharley and Emma went to Vassar for a year. I went to Hepsibeth Hussey's Quaker school, the 'Fair Street Academy.' I liked and respected Hepsibeth, and I enjoyed hearing her read the daily portion of Scripture. One of her favorite passages was 'Paul's Defense before Agrippa.' How her full, resonant voice brought out the beauty, the force of the English language in Saint Paul's simple, straightforward story! I never read it nor hear it, without hearing Hepsibeth, as she sat in the plain wooden chair at her plain wooden desk on the plain wooden platform. The only bit of color in that rather dreary room was the dark green panel of wood over each of the two hall doors. One panel stated in yellowish brown letters, 'What man hath done may be done by man.' I do not know what was on the other panel. Perhaps it informed us that 'What woman has done suggests no such probability.' But I don't think that was it.

Once Hepsibeth called some of us into the small recitation room and told us, oh, so solemnly, that 'circumstances over which she had no control, compelled her to leave the Island for a time.' We were told that the school was to be left in charge of a younger woman who, I dimly seem to remember, had sometimes acted as 'assistant.'

However, she did take the school, and she was a good teacher, but I didn't quite like her man-

ner. She would stroll about the room between classes, sitting on a desk here and there and chatting casually with a near-by pupil. Some of the girls didn't mind. I did. It wasn't dignified for a teacher to be so casual. In those days people sat on chairs or benches, rarely on steps, or on the grass, but never on desks or tables, or surfaces meant to hold inanimate objects only. However, her idea may have been that of many well-meaning but mistaken persons who wish to 'come down to the level' of those whom they want to help. It often prevents their helping. In this case our would-be helper only succeeded in offending our ideas of dignity. *Chairs* were made for people to sit in, or on. Desks were for quite another purpose. Moreover, to keep her balance comfortably she had to cross her knees. Knees were not in society in those days, except the knees of children, and they, the children, were not themselves officially 'in society.' But this young woman was one of Nantucket's gifted daughters, nevertheless. In after years she became a well-known preacher, having charge of a very conservative old parish, whose members, in spite of their conservatism, loved and respected their pastor, and secretly were proud of her popularity among 'strangers.'

Elma at this time had already begun to teach. Elma had the 'gift.' Hattie Wise used to say when Elma's reputation for private tutoring had

HEPSIBETH HUSSEY

gone far beyond Nantucket, 'Mollie, she doesn't know half as much as we do! But Elma has the real gift for teaching.' Her first school was in a lonesome little abandoned shop on Center Street, her pupils of kindergarten age; and her severest punishment was to put the offender into a barrel, in which was a little footstool, where the child might sit, comfortable and safe until such time as announced penitence or the sound of the twelve o'clock bell made release expedient.

A little later on, the public schools adopted the graded system. The two recitation rooms on the west side of the high school were enlarged at the expense of the main room, and there were other alterations on the lower floor. More teachers were needed, so one night after talking it over with Mother, who offered no objections, Elma and I decided that we would have a try for positions as teachers. We had no idea as to the right method of approach to the authorities, but we started at once for the town building. We opened the door at what seemed the main entrance, and ascended a dark and narrow stairway. We opened the door at the top, and found ourselves in the presence of what seemed to be some sort of a 'board,' whether they were Selectmen or School Committee, we didn't know. But we recognized William Hussey Macy, and we felt less nervous. We made our wants and wishes known and were told to go home and present an 'application' in

writing. Neither of us knew what an 'application' on paper might be, but in some way we made ourselves understood, and for some mysterious reason, we were soon informed of our appointments to what must have been the sixth and seventh grades.

Mine was next higher than Elma's, which was fortunate. She was physically far stronger than I, and moreover, the idea of using physical force would never have entered my mind. But it was necessary for the boys that Elma had to, literally, handle. Her room was next to mine, and I used to hear gruesome sounds as I tried to awaken some interest in the boys and girls of my room, in the 'delights of learning.' I had never seen one of them until I met them as their teacher. I had been going about with Brother's friends for two or three years and I had, of course, been treated with the consideration and deference given to young girls at that time. And those half-grown boys and girls seemed of another race. But I tried to wake them to something besides thinking up ways of breaking rules; I don't think that I was very successful. The things they did were so annoying. Whispering, nudging each other, eating continuously — nothing of any importance, so that I could 'complain' to the high-school principal, but a never-ceasing performance of senseless pranks. 'Moral suasion' was the only means I had or could use. Its effect on those

pupils was not in any way remarkable. I think too that my personality made very little impression. The only 'punishment' that I remember was when I made a girl, caught eating, come and stand on the platform and eat everything that I had collected from the pupils for several days past. Stale gingerbread flavored with equally stale peppermints, wilted flagroot, and 'dried apples,' unskinned and uncored, all were consumed with tears and much, though reluctant, expenditure of muscular energy. I look back now with horror upon that consumption of indigestibles with the invisible and even more dangerous swarms of germs, as at least an ill-judged decision on my part that any misdemeanor could warrant such a penalty!

At the end of that term of twelve weeks it was found that I had lost twelve pounds. I went for the vacation to Andover where Brother was teaching in Phillips Academy. There I went about among the young professors' families, an admirer or two came out from Boston, and upon the whole a return to a career didn't seem to me very attractive. However, I came home when school opened and agreed to teach until another teacher could be found. After a week or so, Emma thought that she would like to try this new experience. She taught one term, and lost two more pounds than I did. Apparently we were not cut out for just that grade. Afterwards, I

substituted twice, once for six months in the high school, and the last time in the Coffin School for eighteen months, and was very successful with the more advanced pupils with whom I worked happily.

The plover were due the last week in August, and about the twenty-seventh or twenty-eighth an easterly storm usually heralded their approach; the birds would stop over night on their way south. Sometimes portions of the commons near the ponds were burned over that birds might be lured to linger and search for food in the bare spaces. Certain insects were said to swarm in the warm earth.

There would come an evening when Stepfather would hurry home earlier than usual from the 'Cap'ns' Room,' where he always spent at least two hours after supper. He would rush in as excited as a boy, his blue eyes shining, and his voice vibrating with eagerness as he called out, 'They're going over! Put up my lunch! We're off in the morning at four o'clock.' I would drop whatever I was doing, and so would any one else who happened to be there, except Mother, who sat unmoved and tolerant. And we would follow Stepfather out into the dooryard and stand listening while the grape leaves flapped in the east wind, and the Macy elms across the street swished with a sound of boisterous surf.

And then out of the inky blackness overhead there would come a faint little peeping note.

'There! Hear 'em!'

The sound came nearer, a little soft, staccato whistle, then louder, a bit shriller but the notes dropping still softly, though more quickly, and then the upper air was filled with the nervous, plaintive notes of the plover until the whole atmosphere seemed to become of an unbearable density with the mysterious crying of the invisible birds, driven by instinct into the blackness, fearfully, pathetically leaving the known for the unknown.

It was poignant and exciting beyond words! Gradually the air cleared and only a faint and lonely, more plaintive peeping was heard at intervals, until at last there sounded in our ears but the surfing of the trees and the riotous flapping of the grape leaves in the wind.

It was easy after those moments of exaltation to go about packing up a good luncheon for the morrow, to grind the coffee, while hearing only that plaintive piping of the vast cloud of tiny birds driven irresistibly through the black void to some unseen haven where they should find their home.

Meantime why do they fly over Nantucket — except that they might for the last time touch the homely earth before they rise for flight over the uncharted, infinite sea!

Is it for their stirrup cup of fresh water that they light by the Hummock and Long Ponds?

Do they know that many of their number will be left behind when they rise on the wings of the morning?

That is what I was thinking of as I made the sandwiches, and got out the little pots of quince marmalade, and wrapped the cheese and sections of mince pie in white shelf-paper and then in old damask 'bread-cloths,' with the usual red-checked doilies.

I was *not* thinking, as I surveyed the preparations for the early start, of the potted plover with which we should regale ourselves later on; nor did I think then of the soft brownish wings with orange quills, and black dots, for an extra touch of distinction, that would be used for the brown felt hat to complete the brown fall suit.

But alas, that experience came in due time, and wiped out, or overlaid the memory of the wild night of east wind and boisterous trees, and plaintive, fleeing, seeking plover 'going over'!

One night, roused to an unusual pitch of excitement, Fanny and I recklessly decided that we would go with the men — Stepfather and Harry. Just what we were going for, we could not have told, for neither of us had any feeling for 'sport,' but we wanted to go, to see the birds whose flight had so impressed us.

In the morning while the stars were still shin-

ing, Harry drove up with Fanny in the box-wagon. They got out and came quietly around by the little path to the 'south door,' and we all had a cup of coffee in the dusk. Then the traps were taken out and packed into the wagon, Stepfather donned his 'gunning coat,' Fanny and I were snugly tucked in, and we set off.

The lunch was always taken in a cannikin tub. I have been told that the original spelling was *caulderkin* and that seems logical, since it *is* a 'small cauldron,' but it is *not* a 'small can.' That is, ours weren't. We had a very large one for flour, since it could be kept in a more convenient place than the barrels. The next size held granulated sugar, about twenty-five pounds, and a smaller one was for brown sugar, and there were smaller ones yet for various and temporary uses. This gunning-lunch receptacle was of the granulated sugar size, and was handy for holding berries, for instance, or later in the season, for wild grapes, if the birds failed. In any case one was expected to bring home a 'voyage.' Stepfather never failed at any season to bring home a bunch of wild-flowers. He and Mother were both flower lovers. And so am I.

The weather had cleared during the night, and the wind had settled to a 'dry no'theaster,' the one perfectly satisfactory wind at any season of the year, sweet smelling and with the atmosphere always of crystal clearness. The level commons,

touched here and there already with a hint of warm fall coloring stretched endlessly on all sides of us save to the south, where out of sight beyond the border of pale gold sand dunes we heard the continuous throbbing sound of the sea, broken occasionally by a prolonged groan, as of hopeless effort to reach and clutch the surface-yielding but indomitable shore.

Fanny and I were quite content to sit in the sunshine and pretend to read, but really to enjoy each other's company, sometimes with desultory conversation, sometimes in silence.

We came home in the clear gold sunset with a 'voyage,' consisting of a respectable bunch of yellow-legs, some late huckleberries, two wild roses, some bayberry and a few stalks of the beautiful liatris, and the consciousness of a day well-spent.

CHAPTER VIII

WRECKS

THE first wreck that I remember was that of the Newton, one bitter Christmas morning. Part of her cargo was kerosene and from the appearance of the wreckage that came ashore, it was thought that an explosion must have occurred. One man got ashore and was found dead nearly half a mile from the beach on the road to town, quite naked, with his face in the sand. Many bodies from that wreck and the one of three days before, were later on washed up along the beach. But that one poor soul, finally reaching the shore after the battering of the surf in the intense cold and the dark, and setting out in the hope of finding shelter which he hadn't the strength to reach took such a hold of my imagination that, child as I was, it made my Christmas one of sadness and gloom; and the memory many times in the long years since has sent a little cloud drifting across a Christmas sky.

Those were the days before the life-saving stations were built, and wrecks were discovered almost wholly by chance, from the south tower, or from the lighthouses. Here and there along the shore were humane houses, little shacks with bunks filled with hay, a tiny stove, matches

and wood. Surf boats were in some of these small buildings.

The services of the Island Home were frequently in demand for hauling vessels off the shoals around the Island, and the passengers to and from Hyannis often unexpectedly 'went wrecking' in their way across the channel. Sometimes a derelict was picked up and towed into port. Off the south side of the Island it was the shoals that seemed to cause most of the wrecks. The shoals overlap and a deep channel turns out to be a blind alley. Occasionally in thick weather mistakes would be made as to the various lights along the coast, Sankaty especially being confused with Gay Head.

The year I was born three vessels were wrecked on the south side in one month, by mistaking Sankaty for Gay Head. That winter there was a long freeze-up and I remember Mother said that their first news from the mainland for sixteen days came from 'Sconset via Glasgow, Scotland, having been received there before the steamer sailed for America. The steamer was short of coal; off Quidnet she signaled and a boat went out to her, found what was wanted and sent the steamer around to 'Sconset. The coal was carted from town through heavy snowdrifts. It took more than sixty men four days to clear the roads, and with horses and carts to get the coal to 'Sconset beach. It was then put into bags

and carried out to the steamer in small boats. That was the longest freeze-up in my lifetime, but I was not of an age to appreciate it from any viewpoint.

Sometimes the wrecked vessels were hauled clear, sometimes first having their cargoes taken off, and afterwards they were reloaded. But quite as often the discovery of the wreck was made too late for help, either for the vessel or her crew.

The W. F. Marshall, a new vessel, came ashore near what is now known as Surf Side. It was a thick fog, and happening to enter one of the channels among the shoals, the men suddenly found themselves in the breakers, and heard the shouts of the patrol from the Life-Saving Station, which had then been established. A line was thrown out from the shore and attached, and with a sling the whole crew and the steward's wife and child were brought ashore safely. It was thought that the vessel, being in ballast only and apparently uninjured, could easily be gotten off, but before the preparations were finished, a tremendous gale keeled her over so badly that getting her off was impossible. She was so far up the beach that at low tide it was possible to board her without getting wet. The night she was burned — for the copper I think — we had a shore tea, and saw the conflagration. It was very impressive, the red light, the white beach,

the black sea tossing up glistening spray, the crowds of people ceaselessly moving about — an uncanny but fascinating spectacle.

A wreck, later on, caused by the captain's mistaking Sankaty for Gay Head, was a more cheerful affair. There were no lives lost, and eventually the vessel was hauled off and went on her way to Boston. Meantime her cargo consisting of bananas was brought to town and some of it sold, and the rest sent on to Boston. Everybody had a bunch or two of bananas hanging in shop or shed, and they were delicious. Little boys sat in a row along the edge of the steamboat wharf and gorged until they could hardly get themselves free and go home.

The Warren Sawyer I remember well. She had struck on some shoal, it was thought on Old Man, and had bumped off, and was driven along until smashing through the breakers she walked clean up the beach at Surf Side. She was loaded with scrap iron and cotton, and I remember watching the men and oxen at work getting the bales of cotton out of a big opening cut in her side, as she leaned over toward the sea, the great bulk dark against a flaming sunset. The ox-carts were backed down and filled with the bales whose white fluff blew about like foam. Most of the cotton was taken to town on the little railroad then in existence. The vessel was broken up by a violent storm before all the cotton was saved.

All sorts of things besides cotton were scattered along the beach, and for a long time a great piece of the hull was embedded in the sand. Such a find for the 'strangers' who sometimes were with us at our beach teas!

I did not see the wreck of the Witherspoon, and I am glad. The tale of her last day was harrowing enough. Hundreds of people went out from town that freezing cold Sunday. The mercury was unusually low for Nantucket — sixteen degrees, I was told, with wind and snow. The crew had taken to the rigging, and since five o'clock that bitter morning, when in a smothering snow storm the vessel came ashore, they had been slowly freezing; and during the day one after another had dropped into the sea, which was raging so that all attempts to launch a boat were given up as soon as undertaken. A line was finally sent over the vessel, but the few men left alive were too nearly frozen to haul off the heavy hawser. Nine Nantucketers finally made a frantic attempt to get off to the vessel with a life-raft. They faced almost certain death, and they knew it, but those men got the raft off. It wasn't possible to make any progress and they were hauled back through the breakers, having made fast to a rope that had luckily reached them from the shore.

At last, near night, when only two living men were left, they managed to get those two ashore

by the breeches-buoy, a line having somehow been made fast to the rigging. One of these men, the mate, had seen his wife and his little boy drowned before his eyes. The vessel was so near that voices from the shore could plainly be heard on the vessel. I've never forgotten the story of those who stood by all that day, and suffered helplessly with those freezing men in the rigging. I didn't know many of those nine men who ventured out on the raft, and most of them are gone now, but I sometimes see two that I now know, as they go about their inglorious business in the town. They don't realize that to me they are quite set apart from their fellows. I love to greet them as I pass. There's nothing else to *say*!

One winter there was a wreck and a rescue that will never be forgotten by any one who knew about it at the time. An English vessel with the unromantic name of H. P. Kirkham was wrecked on Rose and Crown Shoal. She sank at once. It was night. The men had to take to the rigging. It was bitter cold and the seas broke over them. At daylight Keeper Remsen of Sankaty Light discovered the wreck and telephoned to Coskata Life-Saving Station. Captain Walter Chase and his crew got under way at once. The station is on the northwest side of Coskata, so the lifeboats have to be hauled across the beach for a wreck on the east side.

The boat is put on wheels and the men tug the outfit over the heavy soft beach-sand, before they can go to the wreck. Then they launch the boat if it is possible, or even if it isn't. On this morning they got off safely and reached the vessel before noon. They managed to save all of those half frozen men who had hung on through the bitter night of wind and icy water.

There were too many persons for the small lifeboat, and she was so low in the water and she took in seas so often that bailing had to be done all the time to prevent her from being swamped. All the rest of the day, wet to the skin, with nothing to eat, and wind and waves steadily increasing, those men clung to the oars, making no perceptible headway. Twice they had to anchor or they would have been blown out to sea and that would have been the end. All night long in that awful sea, with Sankaty Light the only bit of cheer in the wild confusion, they toiled on towards the land and finally after twenty-six hours of furious battle with wind and sea and darkness and bitter cold, Keeper Chase and his men landed with all the wrecked crew on 'Sconset Beach.

Medals were awarded to the captain and his men, a gold medal for Captain Chase, and silver ones for his men. The impressive ceremonies were held in the Unitarian Church. One of the surfmen, Perkins, was missing. He had died of

an illness brought on by that never-to-be-forgotten day and night of exposure and unremitting effort.

I knew a gentle, dignified old lady who told me of her experience on the Joseph Starbuck, wrecked on Nantucket Bar. That was one of the ships built at the shipyard at Brant Point. They had started in tow of one of the Island steamers to go over to Edgartown Harbor, where she was to be loaded for the voyage. Some of the wives of the officers were going over with their husbands and so postponing the last farewells.

One of those fierce nor'westers was blowing and so violently that the steamer soon could make no progress, so she gave it up and came back to her dock. The ship was anchored, but being light, she was mercilessly tossed about, lifted and banged down again on the shoal until the cables broke one after the other and she began to go to sea without the usual preparation. So one mast was cut down, and a sail bent on another and an attempt was made to get back into the harbor. It was useless. She finally struck for good on one end of the bar and turned over on her beam ends with the huge waves breaking over her, and her hull lifting and pounding down again with great violence on the, at moments, almost bare shoal. Mrs. Alley said that the women spent the night in the cabin, the floor of which was slanted at an angle of

forty-five degrees. They were tightly fastened and braced on the upward side, so that they wouldn't pitch forward with the lifting and thumping of the ship. There they endured the long night, expecting that each thump after the dizzy lift would break up the ship. Early the next morning one of the steamers at the dock with a volunteer crew, started out, and some way managed to get a rope made fast to the ship, a whaleboat was lowered into a sea that rose in great columns over the wrecked ship and broke into blinding foam, and while the steamer kept her paddles backing to haul the line taut, all the crew and passengers were safely transferred to the steamer in the whaleboat that made several trips, five I believe. The beautiful Joseph Starbuck eventually went to pieces in sight of her birthplace, having made but one voyage.

One of the most heart-breaking wrecks, for wreck it must have been, although the end was probably seen by no mortal eye, was when we were ice-bound a few years ago, and the Cross Rip Lightship broke away from her moorings and was carried out to sea. There were six men on board. The lightship had neither sails nor power, and she was gone. Six men, comfortable enough with food and fuel, surrounded on all sides by slowly moving ice fields, carrying them to the inevitable end!

The picture of that awful voyage sometimes

comes unexpectedly into my mind, and my imagination starts once more down the sound with those six men, helpless, hopeless, necessarily effortless, straining their eyes as, looking back, Nantucket, unaware perhaps of their plight, sank slowly out of sight, straining their eyes as they looked about on all sides over the hideously slow-moving ice, for some craft that might see them and possibly stand by, though help was obviously impossible. Some of those men were married, all were human, and strong with life. Inch by inch, foot by foot, that lightship was dragged to her doom. And what that was or how it came nobody knows.

Many years ago another Cross Rip Lightship had parted her moorings and drifted out to sea. Months afterwards her crew arrived home by way of New Orleans. They had been picked up by a vessel bound for that port. And so for long months we also hoped for news of these six men drawn to their doom by the silent resistless ice, but as the months have grown into years hope has gradually faded, and how they went out of life we shall never know.

In those early days, 'going wrecking' was no small matter. A lifeboat kept in town was loaded onto a truck and on another truck were piled the sections of a small shack — a forerunner of the portable house — which could easily be set up on the beach to provide shelter

for the men, for sometimes it was an all-day job to reach a vessel and effect a rescue, and I think it was never given up unless the vessel went to pieces before their eyes. Besides the little house, there was a small stove, the wood for it, a pile of old blankets, quilts, lap robes and other wraps that might be needed, a keg of ship-biscuit, plenty of coffee, a coffee-pot and some china mugs and a demijohn of rum. This last item was to be used only in an emergency. These long trucks were of course drawn by horses, and so were the carts that carried the men.

Elma's father had been Commissioner of Wrecks and Insurance Agent for Nantucket, and so was in charge of the wrecking crew. On one occasion a small vessel had run on the shoals not far from the shore and lay helpless, battered by the terrific sea that raged all day. Time after time the wrecking men had tried to launch their boat, time after time they and it were flung high on the shore. Afternoon had come and was going fast, and in spite of the coffee and hardtack at intervals from the little house, the men were about exhausted. It was bitter cold, and besides being hampered by the heavy rubber boots, they were chilled to the bone in their wet and frozen clothes. The little vessel, the waves already washing over her, could not last out the night. The case looked hopeless. Suddenly Elma's

father shouted, 'Off with your clothes, boys! Strip to your drawers!' Then waving his hand to the man at the doorway of the shack he shouted again, 'Bring that demijohn and the mugs!' The man came on a run, and as the men recklessly kicked off their great boots and tore off the clinging ice-cold clothing, each in turn was given a half cup of clear rum. 'Get your boat off!' was the next order. The men sprang to the boat, and the rum warming their very marrow they watched their chance of a spent wave, and with a mighty effort they got safely over the next one. Then came the fight for not only their own lives, but those of the Captain and his wife and the crew of five men, all of whom were safely landed on the beach. The first thing that was done was to roll each of the wreckers in a heavy blanket, and pack him into a cart, that had been driven as near as possible to the line of the surf. In a very few minutes the last man was wrapped and stowed in the bottom of the cart, 'Now drive like Hell!' said Elma's father to the driver. He did, and landed the men at their respective homes.

CHAPTER IX

PLEASANT STREET AND SOME CHANGES

On the corner of Pleasant and Summer Streets an old lady, Sally Gardner, had a shop in her front room. I recall just one visit to that rather depressing room. Perhaps she was closing up her business. There were few articles attractive to children, and my one purchase was a tiny wooden plate on which was firmly glued some sort of fruit. Sally's real vocation was painting in water-color small portraits, and they were very well done. We had one by her of Captain Mooers who raised on the Thames for the first time the American flag, with its thirteen rebellious stripes. Perhaps it was after the turmoil created in London-town by the sight of this new banner, that Captain Mooers went shopping, for he brought home to his wife a glass box with a colored print on the cover. That was ours, too. Both the portrait and the box are now in the Museum of the Historical Association.

Next to Sally Gardner's house stood two small buildings, Peter Hussey's grocery store, and the tiny market where our sausage meat was prepared. The little market differed from the grocery by presenting its gable to the street, also in being painted white and shining clean. Just

where the roof of the narrow piazza joined the upright, a board extended across the whole length. It must have been more than a foot in width. This strip of wood was enlivened by a delightful mural decoration, although it was never referred to by that appellation. Indeed it was never referred to at all. The composition of this painting was at least comprehensive. In the background under a pale blue sky, light pea-green hills overlapped each other, dotted with many red, horned cattle peacefully grazing among little flocks of grayish sheep. In the foreground was a meat-bench on which were realistic joints of beef, very red, and many other easily recognized edibles peculiar to markets. But the *chef d'œuvre* of the artist was the butcher himself. Clad in a long white smock and black beaver hat with tall straight crown, he sternly faced the approaching customer, one arm held stiffly down at his side, the other quite as stiffly bent at the elbow, his uplifted hand holding a black cleaver straight up in the air. This pose probably was intended for a salute rather than a threat, because the market was very popular in the neighborhood. I always used to cross the street to feast my eyes upon this work of art, which still seems to me far superior to much work of supposedly the same order that mysteriously 'gets across' in the name of realism, cubism, modernism or what not. Of this picture, as an old lady

said of a drawing of a horse that was shown her, 'You don't have to ask what it is!'

Already occasionally as families died out, or the last one left was persuaded to sell, houses were being taken down and in 'bays' which seemed to be 'slices' were taken on vessels over to the mainland, where they were set up again in a new environment. Some of these buildings traveled as far as New Rochelle, N.Y. Even on Pleasant Street which had never changed since we could remember, a house quite near us was finally taken down and carried over to Hyannis, and we were told that the President of the Hyannis Railroad lived in it, so we always felt a sort of friendliness for this mysterious personage on whose road we traveled to Boston, or 'changed at Middleborough,' as long as the Nantucket boat, the Island Home, went to Hyannis.

On that vacant space in Pleasant Street, the first high-school alumni celebration was held. It was floored over and a huge tent erected, and we watched the preparations with great interest. Soon afterwards another house was placed on that land, the corner of Pleasant and High Streets. Then the house on the corner of Summer Street was partially burned and eventually taken down. And the little market and the grocery store that stood next to it were taken away, and Eliza's father bought the land, and it

was prepared for one of the first croquet grounds in town. It was enclosed with the customary high plain board fence which the Nantucketers strongly favored, perhaps because of the traditional English feeling for privacy, but this new fence had a touch of elegance which was not by any means universal, for it was finished with a cap at the top and kept painted an immaculate white; and there was a border of flower beds inside all around it except for a wide space on the north where it opened to the brick-paved house-yard. Eliza's older sister began to give croquet parties which Eliza and I faithfully attended, usually without an invitation. It was something quite new for any sort of a game to be played out-of-doors by people in their best clothes. Outdoor things heretofore had required very plain costumes, 'old clothes' being kept for that purpose. On some rather more than usually important occasion, something discarded as 'second best' on its downward way was permitted, but 'sports wear' was unheard of.

Sailing for pleasure had not yet come in, not even had 'passing ball.' Picnics or 'squantums,' buggy-driving, and 'taking walks' were the only ways in which the young people could enjoy outdoor life together. Later on girls began to go pond-fishing with their brothers and their friends, and occasionally rowing on the harbor after supper. But Eliza and I were sufficiently

entertained and excited by the introduction of croquet; and by hook or by crook, being on hand always, we were called upon occasionally to make up sides, and by surreptitious practice when Eunice was out of the way, we managed to pick up some proficiency in the game. The first appearance of Bradlee's young wife with her new baby on her arm, and tiny bronze slippers on her little feet, whose size was apparently still further reduced by the cunningly arranged inlets of blue satin embroidered with bronze beads, thrilled us with a sort of Arabian Nights glamour. We had always heard rubbers suggested as appropriate after four o'clock in the afternoon, when the grass was supposed to become damp. Some one mentioned that matter to this charming young mother who daringly responded only by pirouetting gracefully with those tiny slippers, and the little baby swaying slightly in her careful arms. It was charming and I never forgot it.

The first stirring of womanhood toward public self-expression, the first awakening to the consciousness of woman's right to 'live her own life,' all those movements towards defining and organizing all that were comprehended by the term 'Woman's Rights' — came to me as far as my ear-drums when I was a little girl. Suddenly at this early period of the Emancipation of Woman, a Nantucket woman arrived in bloomers! Mother smiled. When Mother smiled like

that, the subject was disposed of. I don't know just how, but it was! There was nothing to be said. And yet that smile had nothing disagreeable about it. It was a sort of impersonal smile, the Woman's Smile of Wisdom. I wasn't lucky enough to see the Lady of the Bloomers. She had always lived 'over north,' and this time her stay was short. She made no converts, so far as costume went. But a little girl cousin of mine who lived in the visitor's neighborhood, watched anxiously every day, and one morning a shout was heard through the house on Academy Hill, 'Mother! Mother! Here 'tis!' For brevity and comprehensiveness of comment that was an approach to Mother's smile.

Most of Nantucket in those days seemed to be living on its income, little or big, and there was no talk about it. There was a pleasant social atmosphere, though sometimes we heard a regretful reference to the more elaborate entertainments of the days of greatest prosperity of Nantucket. But parties, especially the family tea parties, still continued, even among the Quakers, whose rigid discipline in many other ways did not prohibit these latter social meetings with their accompaniment of excellent cooking. Some historian has explained that Nantucket women had to be good talkers and good cooks because that was all that they had to offer to those young Argonauts when they came home

from sea. Quakerism, the only religious wave that ever swept over Nantucket and drenched it thoroughly, forbade card-playing, music, and dancing. 'A dog, gun, and fiddle take a man to the devil,' was a common saying. Perhaps the statement did not originate with the Quakers. Its ring of finality gives it a Puritan flavor, though the Puritan knew the use and value of guns; while 'carrying firearms' was sufficient cause among Quakers for being 'read out of meeting.' Moreover it seems to savor almost of profanity, and that is not associated with Friends. However, even they seemed to recognize its occasional expediency, as in the case of an exasperated Quaker Captain who called down the gangway to the mate, 'Thee come up here and use some of thy language!'

Harriet Macy had kept store since she was fifteen years old and had become the leading dry-goods merchant of the town. She was always spoken of as 'Harriet' by the older people. I called her 'Aunt,' for she was one of the three Macy sisters, my adopted aunts, who lived in the Reuben Macy house on Pleasant Street, where you may still see the old Doctor's brass knocker with his name, on the front door, though the house is now owned by an adopted daughter of Nantucket who has kept its charm intact. Another Macy aunt was somewhat of an elocu-

tionist, though I don't think it was her specialty. But after she came home to live she consented to take a small class of us for instruction in that art. At least we learned to speak distinctly, without hesitation or slovenly enunciation, even if we could not imitate her silvery tone. That was her gift. As soon as she married Uncle Matthew the Quaker, she started on a course of Shakespeare, for his benefit alone. He liked it, too. We liked him because he always had a bag of peanuts in his pocket, and could stand treat at any time. Neither he nor we ever got too old for that little moment of mutual enjoyment.

All these worthies, and many, many more, the ministers, the school teachers, the two Quaker dentists, the two old doctors, all seemed to stay put without a hint of change, for the years of our childhood, young girlhood, and even into our 'young ladyhood.'

As the evening parties and receptions became less frequent, the clubs, intellectual and otherwise and suited to all tastes, became almost innumerable. They were like the advertised

> 'Quart bowls of different sizes,
> Ninepence apiece and different prices.'

Society was a chain of links of many sizes, each complete in itself, but all of the same material, and forming one great whole. Social distinctions there certainly were, but apparently the matter of choice was equally exercised by

everybody. It could not be otherwise with only twenty grandfathers to the lot. Airs and assumptions of superiority would hardly be tolerated in such a community, which, however, was far from being a democracy. It was rather more like a republic, with states of varying size, character, resources, and ambitions.

It is true, human nature showed, from time to time, signs of its latent possibilities. On one occasion John H., a newsdealer, a tall, rawboned man who always wore a 'beaver' hat, had some errand with an old schoolmate who, having inherited what was for the time a fortune, was living in one of the few 'mansions' of the town. John H. was admitted to the sitting-room. Matthew received him courteously. The business transacted, Matthew escorted his guest to the door and as he was about to close it, he said, 'By the way, John, there's a back door to this house.'

'Oh, is there, Matthew?' replied John briskly, 'I'll report it.'

There was, so far as I can remember, no more talk of money than there was of 'period' furniture. Once I happened to refer to some new acquaintance as 'wealthy,' and Fanny's mother was up in arms at once. 'Never,' she exclaimed, '*never* let me hear you speak of any human being as either "rich" or "poor"!' Well, I took the lesson in good part of course. The mothers ad-

ministered educational morsels indiscriminately to their own or other people's offspring. We didn't mind. All the same, since that time I have met many persons to whom the adjectives 'rich' or 'poor' had to be applied, in order to differentiate them at all from the rest of the crowd!

When Mary F. was said to be about to open another dry-goods store, everybody was interested at once. To us she had been merely one of the elderly spinsters, a sort of cousin of Fanny's, but here she was showing signs of vitality strange in one so old! However, the night of her opening the little shop on Center Street was crowded for the whole evening. Mary F., one of Nantucket's own, had gone into business. It was a matter of course that all *her* own should give her a good send-off. I went with Mother, who bought material for a new gown for me. It was made with a polonaise, and that part was of light gray silky mohair. The underskirt was of purple and white striped stuff. It was a very smart costume. Even to us Mary F. seemed to 'young up' after this venture, and for years shared with Harriet the patronage of the town. Nobody said 'How wonderful!' Nor did they say anything, in fact. Women did what they saw fit to do, and whatever it was, it was accepted without comment. Annie said that her teacher in the Primary School used to make shirts for people, and could hear the lessons just as well as if she had a ruler in her hand instead of a needle.

And yet Fanny's mother remembered that when Horace Mann came to Nantucket he pronounced the schools to be equal, if not superior, to any in New England. Then Mrs. Macy would add grimly, 'And from that moment they began to deteriorate.' Perhaps that was when shirt-making was introduced in school hours.

But Nantucket's reputation for use of the English language in its beauty and precision lasted long after it ceased to be borne out by the facts. Indeed within ten years a nurse from western New York said to a friend of mine, 'Oh, of course I've heard of Nantucket. That's where they speak such perfect English.' They don't now. The vocabulary is no more extensive, but it is no longer Addisonian. I used to have a chore-boy about as big as a broiler chicken, who had a sweet, high-pitched voice that was a fitting vehicle for his meticulous English and its occasional foreign frills. One day I observed that I did hope that our dealer would soon get the expected supply of coal. The chicken piped up, 'Oh, I think that he doubtless will. I saw in the local paper that two ships were en route.' Our Susan was once sent to take a fowl back to the market. When she came back Mother asked, 'Did you tell him that it smelt so bad that we had to burn resin on the stove?' 'No,' said Susan, 'I told him that you were obliged to return it because it didn't have sufficient fra-

grancy.' Presently the butcher boy arrived with a fresh fowl that he 'had succeeded in obtaining' from a certain farm. Now, when I ask the chore-boy if he has swept the sidewalk carefully, he answers lightly without stopping on his way to the barn with the broom, 'Uh-huh. Want an' thing else?'

The one conspicuous industry left to Nantucket at that time was raising school teachers. They seemed destined to carry on the work of leavening the world bequeathed to them by their ancestors, who, however, had gone about it in a different way, rounding Cape Horn at last into the unknown Pacific. Any map will show you how thoroughly this ocean was traversed, for it is peppered with Nantucket family names by which the newly discovered islands were christened. For these men never forgot that over the vast plain of the sea lay the 'purple Island of their love'; and never was the connection broken, though from two to five years might pass before rounding Cape Horn once more they laid their course for Nantucket Bar. If you would care to know the reaction of a child's mind to the experience of 'Doubling Cape Horn,' read Miss Susan Brock's delightful little story with that title.

And then if you would know of the early life of these men whom we knew as just Nantucketers, not even 'old Nantucketers,' read 'A Captain

of a Vanished Fleet' by our beloved Dr. Ben, whose great cross it was in this life that he couldn't trace a line of ancestry back to Nantucket. But without that qualification he was as dear to the hearts of the Islanders as if he had been by birth one of 'our own.' He lived here during his boyhood, he spent every summer here afterwards as long as he lived, and as much time as possible throughout the rest of the year, and he hoped to spend his last days here, but that was not to be. One day the Doctor happened to go with me on some committee business, to see a wonderfully brilliant woman whom I knew well, and who was very handsome, and widely experienced. When he left me at my door, I said, 'Ethel took a great fancy to you, Ben. You must go to call on her.'

With his usual candor he answered, like the boy that he was, 'Oh, no, I can't — I don't have time to see enough of the women I already know.'

'But,' I remonstrated, 'she has the most beautiful pair of eyes in the world.'

'I don't care if she has the only pair,' he said without interest, 'I haven't the time.'

Up in the Arctic with Peary, when things didn't always go right on the steamer, Dr. Ben got hold of an engineer of Nantucket stock, I think his name was Coffin, and they would sit up in the bow, out of sight, and 'talk about

Nantucket until the tears ran down our cheeks.'

And now I come back to Nantucket, and its chief industry after whaling was over and the Civil War, the raising of school teachers. And a superior lot there were too. One of them, teaching in Boston, received the highest salary paid to a woman teacher in Massachusetts. And so these Nantucket girls who didn't go away because they married went away because the world needed them. A large proportion of them taught first for a while in New England and many of them remained there for all their teaching years. Anna Fish said in her delightful paper on 'Nantucket's Principal Exports' that at one time within fairly recent years there were sixty-eight Nantucket school teachers in and around Boston alone. So of course to us it is not to be wondered at that Boston has kept for so long her intellectual prestige.

If they did not make telescopes as did Walter Folger, they used them to some advantage after they were made. If these women did not, like the whalers, fathom and chart the hitherto unplumbed seas, or map the lanes through dangerous reefs and shoals or mark the great currents keeping their courses like rivers through the mighty ocean tides, if they did not discover and name countless islands as they voyaged into the unknown, if items like these could not be listed to their credit, yet like me, resignedly ignorant

of the higher mathematics, they 'knew other things.'

Maria Mitchell, as every one knows, was the first woman astronomer in America, and the discoverer of the comet in 1847. To us she was just 'Fanny's Aunt Maria' who had an abnormal interest in things that went on in the sky, and not quite enough in things nearer at hand. For instance, when another discoverer exclaimed, 'Oh, Professor Mitchell, there's a hole in your stocking,' her only reply was, 'Only *one*?' And on another occasion when a girl said rather officiously, 'Professor Mitchell, your shawl is dragging,' she said coldly, 'I like it so.' There seemed to us to be something lacking in Aunt Maria's attitude toward would-be helpers. But perhaps she saw farther than we did into the springs of human action.

And there was Jemima Austin, whom Stepfather had known in his youth and then again in California, where she was a teacher of Belles Lettres in some school or college. She was, however, best known among Nantucketers as the person who introduced the culture of grapes for raisins in California. Her own ranch was in Fresno, where she carried on her first experiments. The comfortable old house which was her home on Nantucket is still standing on the water side of Union Street.

CHAPTER X

FREEZE-UPS

In the old days before there was telegraphic communication with the mainland, a long freeze-up had a curious effect upon Nantucket. An interval of a day or two in the regular boat schedule because of wind or ice was of little consequence. The mail was still consciously missed. But when there could be no doubt that we were booked for a long period of being shut in — never a question of being shut out! — by the end of the second day the rest of the world began to seem remote. By the end of the third day, it had ceased to exist. Nantucket became to us the universe. The instinct of curiosity even, together with that of worry, of personal interest, seemed to be quite atrophied. The daily routine was calmly followed with no grumbling at conditions. It is true that Billy Clark kept faithful watch in the tower for signs of the breaking ice, especially if the one steamer was on the 'other side.'

But what causes a protracted freeze-up is a season of bitter cold, when the ice makes out from our shores; and the northwest wind brings down from the coast of Maine and farther north great floes of heavy ice, and fills in the chord of the bay where it is held by the long arm of Great Point;

and, brought into the inner harbor by the tide, the great cakes meet the shore ice until the harbor is completely sealed. Sometimes the cakes and huge blocks of ice pile up on each other in the narrow passage between Brant Point and Coatue until there is a solid barricade resting on the bottom, between the two shores. It is not unusual for men to be able to walk across this space on the ice.

Several times the steamer, happening to be at Woods Hole, has worked her way down to the solid ice perhaps a mile or more from shore and passengers have walked out and boarded her. Before the ice becomes too solid the steamer is often able to 'butt out.' I have been on the old Island Home when we have reached open water by that method. The steamer would back a short distance and then shoot ahead at full speed and ram into the ice, that would crumble at the bow, and send a crack across the harbor with a report like a cannon. Nothing but a change in temperature and a strong south wind will clear a freeze-up. Meantime life goes on, housekeeping, business, with marketing, shopping, card parties, tea parties at home; offices and loafing-places warm and comfortable and well patronized as usual. The usual exodus at five o'clock when the men go home for supper. The procession up Main Street is more scattering than usual, and no coat pockets are bulging with letters and news-

papers. For at whatever time the mail was distributed no head of the family ever thought of taking the letters to the waiting womenfolk at home, until it was time for him to go for his supper.

The breaking-up of the ice, with the first arrival of the boat, is not, however, wholly enjoyable. I used to wonder if it were like the resuscitation from near-drowning, glad to be alive, of course, but by a painful transition.

In the first place there was always some sad news, illness or death of individuals or some widespread calamity. Always a short time after the arrival of the boat, the hearse would be seen going down to the wharf, that simple, dignified rectangular box of a hearse, drawn by a sedate horse, sedately driven by an elderly man in perfect harmony with the rest. And then every one asked, 'Who is it?'

Then the sorting of the mail was a serious work, and outside help was called in. The streets began to take on an appearance of increased activity. The heavy express-wagon lumbered up from the dock, stopping first at the express office, delivering to markets, groceries and other business places before it jolted uptown to private houses, with the fascinating boxes and parcels which never to this day have lost their interest for me, whatever their contents. By the time the express matter was delivered downtown,

the newspapers were 'out' and the men were hastily scanning headlines, their interest in their country and in other nations once more awakened. Then the mail was finally distributed and the shutter raised from the window for those who did not have private boxes. Delivery by postmen had not been thought of for Nantucket in those days.

I waited once eleven days in Woods Hole during a long freeze-up for a chance to reach the Island, and got it too. Quite a number of us, Nantucket bound, had left Boston the morning after a severe blizzard. It was bitter cold, but one of the men of the party had that morning telegraphed to Nantucket and found that the steamer had left the Island at the usual time. On arriving at Woods Hole we saw the steamer slowly fighting her way through heavy white ice, and when it finally reached the wharf, the purser hurried into the waiting-room and announced that they couldn't go back, for the sound was full of ice. So we all trudged up the hill to a boarding-house.

After a day, when it had become certain that it was a real freeze-up, I got a promise from the captain of the steamer that when they landed the first mail-bag on Nantucket, they would land me. On the evening of the eighth day I got word from the steamer that they would make an attempt to get out in the morning at six o'clock. I packed

my trunk and sent it down, and then went to bed. But I couldn't sleep, for I was vividly imagining my descent from the deck of the Island Home into a wobbling lifeboat, and I couldn't see how it could be done!

However, at six o'clock the next morning, I the only woman on board, we banged away from the wharf just at the faint approach of dawn. As it became lighter there was no water to be seen except here and there a black air hole in the white ice. They opened the door in the paddle-box, for the Island Home was a side-wheeler, and let me look at the great wheel as it slowly turned, its paddles fringed with huge icicles, huge greenish translucent pendants, gleaming as they caught the light. It was mysterious and awful, the big dark cavern. Then as a paddle caught up a cake of ice and threw it against the partition of the purser's office, the boat would tremble at the impact as if it had struck a rock.

At Nantucket, meantime, passengers and mails were on their way to Great Point, where it was thought most probable that the steamer could get near enough for their transfer to be made in small boats. But the steamer found it impossible to get through the ice. I don't know how far we got, I think that we made about a mile, but it was hopeless, and at ten o'clock we were back at Woods Hole Wharf. And I went back up the hill and settled myself in my old room for another period of endurance.

On the eleventh day of my stay, we started again after breakfast. This time the stewardess came along, although, as before, I was the only woman passenger. The ice was piled high on the shoals and we crept slowly along to the eastward, banging and batting through the great floating cakes of ice. Finally just at slack water we anchored in an open space, a sort of lake, off Nantucket on the east side. The shore was covered with ice, heaped up like a wall of marble blocks, and there was more or less floating ice near the shore, but for twenty minutes the space around the steamer was clear.

The surfboat from the Coskata Station had been hauled across the strip of beach to Quidnet and was waiting for us. I stood modestly at the rear of the group as a very narrow ladder was let down to the lifeboat, but to my horror the courteous Captain beckoned to me to come first. I had been brought up to do what I was told to do on a 'ship,' so I allowed myself to be turned around, and then followed the direction to put my foot on the unseen rung of the ladder. Someway I hit the right rung with foot after foot, and I at last felt a flat surface under my feet and my shoulders were firmly grasped by a pair of strong hands, that turned me deftly around so that I faced a big thick-set man whom I remembered seeing as a small boy. I at once grasped *his* shoulders with the feeling that he was

as safe and immoveable as a lighthouse, and I didn't let go until I was gently but firmly seated on a keg of cider jelly and the rest of the few passengers safely bestowed.

They brought us ashore where we clambered over the lumps of ice to the beach. There was time to bring all the mails, the express matter, and some freight, meat and grain especially. Then the returning tide began to bring back the ice, so the steamer turned around and started back to Woods Hole. A young man who had his sleigh — for Nantucket was covered with snow — brought me into town. Stepfather was waiting at the front door of our house, for the boat had been sighted from the tower and her movements reported; and as he took me out of the sleigh I fell into his arms and burst into tears.

Another freeze-up that I recall, though I took no active part in it, was one winter when I had agreed to substitute for Sarah Robinson, who was first assistant in the high school. The new principal couldn't get here, as we were frozen up when school opened after the mid-winter vacation. So Mrs. Fish, a very able woman in many directions, who had been first assistant in the high school in Brother's time, was asked to open the school and act as principal until the arrival of the new master.

January is the month for freeze-ups to threaten, and the danger is not over until Febru-

ary has blown into March. I quote from a fragmentary diary, begun that year, not my first by any means, nor my last; how these little volumes have escaped the flames in all the decades of semi-annual housecleaning I do not know. The ink was of a poor brand, for it is badly faded, but the script is still legible, so that I can give the exact date of this particular freeze-up.

January 30. To-morrow I shall go into school to take Sarah's place for a term. The new principal hasn't arrived. Thursday we had a terrific gale; the boat went in the morning, and has not returned. That is, she isn't here. She started for Nantucket yesterday morning and got as far as the heavy ice that fills the chord of the bay and far out into the sound. It was hopeless, so she turned about and headed for the mainland. She couldn't make any headway against the ice floes driven down by the northwest wind and filling the sound, so there she is, stuck fast, two miles from the shore.

Thursday evening there was a fire, and the high wind caused great alarm. However only one house was burned; and we are thankful for that. But alas, one more of the old interesting landmarks has vanished.

The people on the steamer must have watched the blaze with some anxiety. Of course they could see the great glow in the sky behind the cliff that hid the town.

This situation may be romantic, but it has its disadvantages. Shoals and surf on one side of the Island, a border of four miles solid ice on the other and broken ice to the edge of the world, one steamer frozen fast at her moorings, and the other frozen fast in the sound. The snow is falling steadily. But the heart still beats.

February 5. Still frozen up. This is a period of unusual cold. The Island Home remains firmly held in the ice about two miles from the shore. Communication with the steamer is kept up by means of the ice, which, since it is there, is fortunately strong enough now to allow horses and carts to carry the coal from town which is sorely needed on the steamer.

The steers consigned to the butchers were finally driven ashore, and the minute they smelt the land they stampeded, and clambering up the icy shore tore through the town with an enlivening effect. They were some way caught and I suppose most of them have now gone the appointed way of steers.

Wednesday the mercury was two degrees below zero, the coldest for twenty-five years. Yesterday two men walked from their vessel, frozen in about five miles off shore. They were out of water, and returned with two buckets full. They reported that except for the lack of water they were 'comfortable.' Poor things!

At the beginning of this freeze-up a vessel was

sighted, helplessly keeled over, and the men in the rigging. The vessel has disappeared. It was probably carried down the sound by the ice. The men must certainly have frozen to death Tuesday night, if they had lasted to that time. A vessel struck on the outer edge of Great Point Rip, and the crew were forced to abandon her, and partly by the boats, dragging them at times over the ice, they managed to reach Great Point. They had carried safely with them the Captain's wife and had not only saved all the vessel's papers, but the pet cat! They were on or in the ice all day, having left the vessel at four o'clock in the morning. The vessel stuck fast in the ice with all sails set. A most pathetic sight! A large sound steamer now lies motionless in the ice, frozen in, a good distance out in the sound.

On all sides of the island now, as far as one can see, is a plain of apparently solid ice. Even the line of breakers along the shore is milk-white with ice cakes. People still remain calm and cheerful; the arrival of the mail will cause not only excitement but — who knows?

February 6. The wind has hauled from the nor'west to the no'theast. This is a cheering sight — though the whales and roosters on the weather vanes took the short cut instead of the long way around. There's a possibility now of a blessed southeaster, the only key to unlock the ice.

February 10. The Island Home has at last gotten clear of the ice and has gone on her way rejoicing to Woods Hole. It is two weeks today since her last trip to that place.

Affairs go on well at school. Annie Bodfish asked one of the pupils what sculpture was, and he said, 'The hair on your head.'

I am still fond of almost all of my boys and girls. Must remember the man who liked bananas in the abstract but not in the concrete.

Helen Marshall thinks we ought to make sail and get nearer the mainland. We are right in the way of navigation. Everything runs into us! (These items do not seem quite relevant; but they are right here in the diary. I was teaching, but besides spending much time watching the steamer, and the movements on the ice, in plain sight from the north windows of the schoolroom, I still had time for some intercourse with my kind, so was able to pick up these pearls.)

February 20. This week we have had a frightful wreck. Last Monday a small boat arrived from a vessel wrecked on Old Man Shoal. The boat had the Captain and three men. They had been all day getting in from their vessel which had struck the night before. They left eight men on the vessel, because the little boat couldn't hold them.

Queer rumors are afloat. The affair is rather mysterious, but at any rate, it seems certain

that the Captain sold his long boat at the last port, and now has left his crew to go down with the vessel. The men must have drowned as the vessel was seen to turn completely over. The Captain said that the men had built a raft for a last chance, but nobody seems to have any clear idea of the affair. Everybody is indignant with somebody.

Yesterday the Island Home started at the usual time, struck on a rock and knocked a hole in her. She barely reached the dock. One day this week on the homeward run she caught fire, but the blaze was put out before much damage was done. What with ice, fires, wrecks and rocks we seem to be having an eventful winter.

CHAPTER XI

THE CIVIL WAR

We were living through the years of the Civil War, and I can remember processions with torchlights, and terrible straw men, 'effigies' they were called, that were set on fire and thrown into empty places to burn. These nights were horrors, but of course I wanted to go with Brother to see it all, and occasionally Mother would let me go for a short time. After Father's death Brother regarded me as his special charge. He could always be trusted with me, and he never quite, throughout his life, got over his feeling of responsibility for me. 'The Anglo-Saxon man looks out for his women,' he would say sometimes, when I was a girl; and whenever occasionally, as an Anglo-Saxon woman, I had my own views and shaped my course accordingly, he gradually broadened his mind sufficiently to admit that although on general principles his judgment differed from mine, he could see that mine was a 'special case,' and therefore to be accepted. And that recognition of the personal equation, for an 'Anglo-Saxon man,' with a sense of responsibility for 'his women,' was a development!

One day Eliza and I were on the Mill Hills, after a stroll on the edge of the town, when we heard the bells tolling. It wasn't like the sound of the firebells, nor like the Sunday bells, but it was some way awe-inspiring.

We hurried back to town to hear the news of Lincoln's assassination. Our first thought was that we should all be taken prisoners by the rebels; beyond that our imaginations could not venture.

But we were soon diverted by the sight of crape-bordered American flags displayed all over town, and by the excitement, subdued and therefore mysterious, that pervaded all our homes. Preparations were under way for a Memorial Meeting at the North Church, and all the clergymen of the town were to be there; it was a Union Meeting. We had never heard of such a thing. Mother sent up to the Church a beautiful alabaster vase, which had been given her when she was married. It was at least two feet high, with carvings of foliage, and a ram's head half hidden by the leaves. It had always stood under a little slender-legged mahogany table in our parlor, and had been looked upon by me with respect if not with the admiration that I felt later on. And now this important detail of the parlor furnishing was to be sent out of the house to be used for flowers for a sort of funeral. They said it was to be draped with crape wound

through its graceful handles, and filled with calla lilies.

I was told that it was a lovely thing as it stood on the marble-topped Communion Table in front of and below the high white-painted pulpit. The women all put black or white strings on their bonnets, and in some cases, one white and one black.

Eliza and I were not allowed to attend this service, but Eliza was invited to spend the day with me.

We were greatly impressed as Mother left the house, her broad black ribbon 'strings' tied in a big bow under her chin and an unusually serious expression on her always quiet face.

After we had seen the last of the neighbors pass, it seemed uncannily still in our street, which was always still anyway, so we began to cast about for entertainment.

It didn't seem quite right that there should be nothing about our house to show that we also had a part in this general solemnity. We thought it over. Then we went upstairs to a closet where Mother kept among other things her 'piece-bags,' for it was the custom of all well-brought-up women to put away against the time of need remnants new or old of all fabrics of beauty or of once intrinsic value.

There were occasional gala days when these piece-bags were looked over and the discards

given to us for our dolls, and there was one remarkable woman in the neighborhood, Emily's aunt, who, childless herself, yet suffered gladly other people's children, and who would let us do the sorting out of her piece-bags and take what we liked. She was unique among women. Now, for the first time, feeling the constraint of a higher law, we took it upon ourselves to empty the contents of Mother's piece-bags on the floor, and make our selections.

We carefully laid aside all black and white material, bonnet ties, sash ribbons, the inevitable velvet ribbon and 'half-squares' of silk velvet, from the remade 'winter bonnets,' top parts of silk or satin dress skirts, or single breadths, heavy grosgrain belts, even short lengths of the mohair braid, countless miles of which temporarily and simultaneously cleaned the sidewalks and 'protected' the edge of the dress skirt. There were bits of embroidered muslin flounces, pieces of white net or strips of white silk; anything, in fact, that could be draped or tied effectively, was seized upon.

We took the bunch of material downstairs and then we began at the dining-room window that faced the street, and we worked around the house 'decorating' all the windows on the lower floor. We formed long, loopy bows and garlands, and festoons, and I would pin them up and Eliza would go outside and stand about two feet

from the window, to get the effect. If she approved, and she usually did, being utterly devoid of any artistic endowment, she would cross her arms over her breast, and emit a sort of groan, or moan, which could be clearly heard through the closed window, and was meant to convey unutterable admiration.

Thus encouraged I would proceed to the next window. As we got to the front of the house the heavier material gave out and we were obliged to bunch up and make little clusters, rosettes or tassels of the left-overs with narrow ribbons and strips of things hanging down, rather thin and limp in effect, but Eliza still admired the wonderful results of my genius, so all was well.

We had just finished the decorations when the neighborhood began to come home from the service. Mrs. Pratt, who lived next to us on the south, came first. We were watching and we saw her glance at the house, and rather slow up as she approached. Our hearts beat with excitement. She came to the door, and opening it called cheerfully, 'Do you have shoestrings for sale?'

Now Mrs. Pratt was a nice woman and she made the best sugar cookies I ever ate, but I never forgave her for that question. And I never mean to try. We were cast down but not destroyed. There was Mother to surprise, and she was a person of taste. Every one said so.

Then Mother came. She wasn't as enthusiastic as we had hoped, and vaguely I seem to remember a queer sort of smile about her mouth, but she didn't laugh, and she wasn't cross. We some way received the impression that the decorations, having demonstrated our patriotic grief, had been up long enough for a small house like ours, that didn't really lend itself to decorations of this sort. I'm sure that she didn't say all this in just these words, but that is the impression that we got, and that lesson has lasted all these years, a lesson in 'fitness.' As Brother would have said, 'That was education.'

I know that we at once set about removing the decorations, but the process lacked the ardor with which they had been designed and executed.

Vividly I remember picking lint upstairs in the Athenæum. Mother would dress me in white, with a black silk 'raglan' tied in about my waist with a silk cord and tassels. Then putting a leghorn hat over my freshly curled hair, she would start me off with my reticule on my arm, to do my share of 'war work.'

I rather liked the whole thing, but my reticule was at first the most important detail, for it was a dainty thing of tooled leather, lined with red moiré silk, and it had scissors and a little ivory bodkin, slipped through loops of ribbon on the inside of the cover. The reticule was filled with

bits of damask table linen, which I patiently picked into lint, under the direction of Mary Eliza and Lydia, and Florette and Lottie. They were the 'young ladies' of the town, the older sisters in some cases of my playmates. Their young men were at the front, and so these girls were in my mind set apart from the rest of my small world. One of the young officers of their set had sent them silver trefoils, the badge of the Second Corps, Army of the Potomac. They were made from quarter-dollars, by a silversmith in John's regiment. I remember that Mary Eliza wore hers on her hair, which was parted and rolled above each temple over a 'rat,' the rest of her straight dark hair being carried to the back of her head to the bunch of waterfall curls. She looked to me very elegant.

While they picked lint they sang patriotic songs, and one was about 'Ellsworth, young and brave.' We had a brightly colored lithograph portrait of this daring youth, and I still have the portrait. It hangs in the studio. I can remember lying on the floor — the picture before me — supporting myself by my elbows, my chin in my hands, just absorbed in worship of 'Ellsworth, young and brave.' My reticule became an unimportant item, a mere convenience, like a box or basket. People who know — or make — definitions and things, and can tabulate or index all the processes of the subconsciousness for the

benefit of the bewildered and unconscious possessor, might say that this abandonment of my reticule in favor of the lithograph was due to a release from the bondage of material things and the awakening of the spirit of hero-worship. It certainly had nothing to do with the awakening of any feeling for art. My reticule was a far more artistic production than the colored lithograph. In any case something about the portrait appealed to me. It may have been the daredevil effect of the cocky little cap with a visor, unbecoming, but jauntily adventurous. And the wearer had adventured and he was dead, this hero, so 'young and brave.'

As I have said, my ambition at this time was, when I grew up, to be an army nurse. I don't know what I really thought about 'war.' I suppose that war seemed to be a chronic condition of life. Of course it meant awful things behind the songs and silver trefoils and flags and uniforms. I know that it meant prisons, for there was Cousin Seth; and it meant death, for there was young Rivers; and it meant torn clothes, for there were comfort bags. I myself contributed a little Bible, bound in red leather, to a comfort bag. I offered it with the hope that it might deflect a rebel bullet from the brave heart of the wearer. They did wear them, for I had read stories about them. I'm sure if my offering had been worn by any soldier boy, the

protuberance caused by its presence on his person would have made him a tempting mark for friend or foe. The volume was of such fine print that any prolonged perusal of its contents soon would have resulted in total blindness and the necessary retirement of this one man from the range of the rebel bullets. Even in diamond type the little book was almost cubical in form. We do better in these days. But I don't think that it occurred to me that it would be read. It wasn't, in the story that inspired the gift. That is, it wasn't mentioned. To my mind it was a beautiful little book, though; the edges of the leaves were gilded, the morocco binding soft and fine, and of a lovely color.

There was one very exciting evening when the Howard Society stayed for supper in the rooms on the corner of Main and Orange Street, upstairs. The only ladies I can recall, besides Mother, are Mrs. Mitchell and Mrs. Cartwright. Flags were streaming from upper windows, and high across the street, and Fanny's father, Alfred Macy, stood on the steps of the Pacific Bank and gave an address to the throng that packed the Square so closely that one could have walked on their heads as easily as on the cobbles under their feet. And then there was a torchlight procession, in which Brother and his boys joined. They were real torches that swayed and flared and smoked and dripped. I loved those torches. It was like

Roman history and the French Revolution and the Christian martyrs — odds and ends of impressions that we had picked up in our reading of the Abbott books and school speakers.

On the arrival of the steamer each afternoon a crowd assembled on the wharf for the news of the war, and when the boat was near enough for a bunch of papers to be tossed ashore, Alfred would tear one out and mounting one of the big piles would read the latest war news to the crowd, while the tears streamed down his cheeks. Then Billy Clark, the town crier, at that time in his vigorous youth, would seize his papers and start off 'crying' what he could remember of Alfred's reading. And if in his excitement he called it 'Molasses Junction' instead of 'Manassas Junction' nobody laughed — then. No, Billy wasn't amusing in those days, when Nantucket had sent more than its quota of men from the steadily lessening population of the Island.

The Coggeshalls were at Great Point Lighthouse during the Civil War, and Great Point at the best of times is rather a desolate place. A narrow spit of land, or beach, rather, relieved for its six or eight miles only by patches of beachgrass, heaps of seaweed, a bit of wreckage or other débris thrown up by the sea, it stretches out into the sound towards the northwest like a warning forefinger, signaling with the lighthouse on its very tip. From Coskata at the base

of this long finger the Coatue peninsula reaches down nearly to Brant Point, confining the waters of the inner harbor, and leaving only a half-mile opening between it and the shore to westward.

Up in the center of the curve as the shore sweeps around from Great Point, the Coskata Coast Guard Station now watches out. It wasn't there fifty years ago. Nothing was there. Nothing was anywhere in the neighborhood of the lighthouse. The only communication with the town was by boat, and sailboat at that. A visitor might arrive from a stray fishing boat, but in winter when the outer bay is packed with ice the little group at the lighthouse might be marooned for weeks without news of any kind or the sight of a new face.

Besides Keeper Coggeshall and his wife and son there was an assistant keeper, but even with a household of this size life was hardly gay for socially inclined Mrs. Coggeshall, who frankly confessed that she got tired to death of the sight of her own husband! 'And I used to tell him so!' she would add, with a twinkle in her shining blue eyes. 'And he didn't mind. He said that things might be worse!'

Once in early spring after a long shut-in winter, Elma's father, out for a day's fishing back of the Great Point rips, went ashore for a little visit with his old friends. Mrs. Coggeshall,

like the rest of the family, was overjoyed at having a visitor, newsbringer, and listener.

'Why, think!' she said, 'I haven't heard a woman's voice for over six months!'

'You get your things, Annie,' said the visitor, 'and I'll take you down to see Mary.' So Annie went to town, and after a few days with Mary and her soft voice and gentle ways, she came back refreshed to the routine of the life at the lighthouse.

All through the war there were of course days and nights, even weeks of suspense. The town of Nantucket itself had to take what was given it in the way of news. Freeze-ups interfered, and often 'living gales' prevented the steamer's going out. There was no telegraphic communication with Nantucket in those days. Continuous watch was kept in the Lighthouse tower, for at any moment the glass might pick up a rebel cruiser headed in shore from the scattering but endless procession of craft of all sorts going east or west through the sound. And then one never-to-be-forgotten day the watchman in the tower came down with an anxious face. 'Something has happened,' he said, 'and it's something pretty bad. Every flag in the sound is at half-mast! Every one, bound east or west!'

It was no weather to sail to town. They were helpless. They must wait.

'I'm going to find out what's the matter,'

said the boy suddenly. 'I'll go over after dinner to the Haulover.'

So as soon as possible the boy set out for the long pull through the soft beach-sand, around or across the dunes, fighting the wind, blinded by the blowing sand, until he reached the Haulover, the narrow strip of beach between the head of the harbor and the open sea.

From the Haulover, either in the dory always kept there in a shed, or by the longer way on foot, the boy made his way to the nearest farm-house on the other side of the harbor, where for some reason, weariness or the lateness of the hour, he spent the night.

They had no newspapers, but late news had been brought to them by some one driving past the farm.

Next day with his message, the boy started back to Great Point. It was a weary pull over the long stretch of beach, but at last he reached the lighthouse where they were anxiously awaiting his news. He tried to tell them. It was difficult.

'Lincoln's dead!' he gasped. 'President Lincoln! He's dead! Somebody shot him!'

Ah, those flags, mysteriously at half-mast!

'No, they didn't have any papers. That's all they knew. He's dead!'

They turned, stunned, groping their way blindly into the little sitting-room. 'And all the

rest of that day,' said Mrs. Coggeshall, a far-away look in her eyes, 'there wasn't a stroke of work done in the house. Nobody had any dinner. Nobody thought of it. Nobody said a word. We just sat there.'

The hours wore away. Perhaps the sunlight took a reddish tinge. Perhaps it was the striking of the clock, for suddenly the mother awoke to the consciousness of the present need. Her men must eat. Sunset was not far off. Their light must shine from the tower.

The morrow brought for their relief the boy refreshed by his long sleep, who announced that he was going to Polpis to get a newspaper.

Later on he set off for the long trudge through the heavy beach-sand to the Haulover. This time he must surely have launched the dory for the most direct route to Polpis. He would have rowed down the harbor, rounding Pocomo Head and so up into the lovely harbor of Polpis, the little village about five miles from town. He was back at Great Point before dark, and then in the little sitting-room of the lighthouse thirty miles at sea, they read the story of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Mrs. Coggeshall lived in town after her husband's death. She was a cheery, witty old lady, prominent in philanthropic work of one sort or another. But whenever I met her, or even heard her name mentioned, I saw once more only those

flags mysteriously at half-mast, heard the gasping, husky voice of the weary boy, 'Lincoln's dead!' and felt again the heavy silence in the little cozy room with its stricken household, roused only from the stupor of their grief when the gathering shadows warned them that it was time to tend the light.

My first remembrance of Cousin Seth was when he came home from Libby Prison. I had become familiar with his photograph, taken in his uniform, and the little devil-may-care cap on his head just like the lithograph of 'Ellsworth, young and brave.'

Underneath the portrait Cousin Seth had written in pencil, 'Pretty well, I thank you!' This was all very well for the reckless little cap, and the twinkle in his eye. But it didn't seem quite dignified for a soldier in uniform; and neither did his pose, as he sat easily in his armchair with his knees crossed in a sort of nonchalance. You see at that time even a man was supposed on all formal occasions to keep both feet on the floor when seated, though he might not always go so far as to keep his heels in touch with one another.

However, when Cousin Seth came to see Mother, it was a different Cousin Seth from the photographed soldier. When the first Nantucket boys went to the war, their physical average was

said to be unusually high. But among them all Cousin Seth was first and foremost. There was neither blemish without nor weakness within that vigorous young body; he was pronounced physically perfect. Like the others, blithely he responded to his country's call. The coming back was another matter.

Cousin Seth was not blithe as he sat with me on his knee. In that quiet voice which had the curious hint of finality that I've always noticed in the returned soldier when telling his experiences, he told Mother about his life in Libby Prison.

There was no twinkle in his eye as he talked about young Arthur Rivers, only nineteen. I remember how Cousin Seth said: 'Yes, Lois, the boy died in my arms. I wrapped a flag around him and passed him out. It was all I could do.'

A little while ago I asked one of the few remaining G.A.R. veterans in Nantucket, where Cousin Seth got a flag in the prison. 'Oh,' he said, 'the boys smuggled them in whenever they could. You see, every morning the guard would come and say, "Boys, bring out your dead." There could be no preparation for burial, of course. That was the last we knew of them, and if they could go out wrapped in the flag, why — that meant everything. It meant our country and it meant home.'

One day Cousin Seth, with a bunch of other soldiers — prisoners all, perhaps, I don't know — was being transported somewhere by rail. They stopped at a station. There was a crowd on the platform, and one of the women asked Cousin Seth if he were hungry. 'Yes, madam, very,' he replied. The woman, without a word, turned and ran back through the crowd, and went out the other side of the station along a road up a hill over which she disappeared. In a few moments she came in sight with a big basket in her hand and started running down the hill. Just then the train pulled out of the station.

Cousin Seth didn't live long after he came home. I wish that he had. I wonder if the twinkle would ever have come back to those deep-set gray eyes! Or was everything 'different'?

Sometimes during the Civil War when Mother was taking Brother and me for a visit on the mainland with relatives or friends, we changed cars at a station crowded with soldiers going home, perhaps from the hospitals, for one with his arm in a sling sat with us for the latter part of our journey. I recall how Mother at once adopted him, folding the heavy traveling shawl to make a pillow for the wounded arm, and opening the inevitable lunch basket for sandwiches and fruit for the young man, who, though rather silent, seemed to appreciate Mother's care of him.

As we had made our way across the platform, a tall soldier suddenly bent and lifted me for a moment in his arms, kissed me and put me gently down. It was so swiftly done that we hardly stopped on our way. 'He has a little girl of his own' was Mother's quiet comment, so I thought no more about it at the time.

And so these last slight contacts with 'The War' seem to have left in the child's mind a friendly feeling for the tall soldier who 'had a little girl of his own,' and a feeling of appreciation and kindness, and responsibility for the comfort of the wounded boy going home to a mother like our own. And after all that is not a bad residuum. If it could be universal and continuous, the New Jerusalem might be worth the price, already paid.

CHAPTER XII

OTHER NANTUCKET DAYS

After the Soldiers' Monument was finished in the fall of 1874 and delivered over to the town, there was a small sum of money left in the hands of the committee who had received the subscriptions and had had the whole direction of the undertaking. They voted that this money should be used towards some sort of a public ceremony of dedication.

There was a good deal of discussion causing much delay, so that nothing was done at the time. Nantucket was not greatly given to what were called 'public displays.' It was sometimes accused, by would-be agitators of various movements, of lacking 'public spirit.' Superficially perhaps that was true. The people on the Island were highly individualized. Their opinions were independently formed. At Town Meeting, this characteristic gave great vitality to the meetings, which were usually well attended.

Probably Quaker ancestry and Quaker training still retained some influence with the Nantucketers, so far as 'displays' were concerned, but for whatever cause, there didn't seem to be much enthusiasm among the older men of the

town. Finally, however, as spring approached, the younger men roused themselves, and the Dedication was planned for the morning of Memorial Day.

The street wasn't paved at the Square where the monument stood, and the yellow clay brought into high relief the dark gray granite shaft, and the crowds of men and women chiefly in black or dark clothes who lined the Square on all sides. Doors and windows of the neighboring houses were filled with spectators, but most of the neighborhood had gathered early, with camp chairs for the women, leaving their houses open for late comers who preferred perhaps a place more remote from the crowd. Little boys sat in rows on the fences and young girls and young men gathered, standing, in congenial groups. People from all the town were there, and if there was a lack of 'public spirit' nobody could have failed to be conscious of something far deeper, something that bound all these people together with a bond that nothing could break. They were Nantucketers, Island-born, gathered to do honor to 'their own.'

Nantucket had furnished more than its quota of soldiers and sailors for the Civil War, and many had never come back. Their names were cut deep in the shining panels on the monument, and when at the word of the Master of Ceremonies, the children standing in a ring around

the monument advanced in order and laid their offering of flowers at its base, some of the watching eyes in those silent groups of spectators could not see because of the streaming tears. The Unitarian minister, Rev. N. A. Haskell, gave an eloquent address, Dr. Jenks, who never failed his town when there was need for his voice or pen, read a touching poem, and another man who certainly filled an important place in our Nantucket life, sweet-voiced Ben Tobey, led the singing. The Masons and Odd Fellows were there, and, of course, the few men living in Nantucket, some of them hurt and maimed, who had been comrades of those in whose memory the services were held. And although we went home saddened by what we had seen and heard, yet there was also a feeling of pride and satisfaction that for Nantucket's sacrifice, Nantucket had made fitting recognition.

When Nantucket, years afterward, seemed to consent to the admission of automobiles, as a summer resort it threw away its highest trump, but it wasn't quite prepared to throw down the hand. When a few years ago the suggestion was made that, since it was a hindrance to traffic, our Soldiers' Monument should be removed to that bare, dreary spot near the Prospect Hill Burying-Ground, there was enough of the old Nantucket spirit still left to make such a strong protest that the proposed plan was abandoned.

Nobody seemed to know who first made this incredible suggestion. Our ancestors could bring a ship of three or four hundred tons around Cape Horn or through the Straits of Magellan, on her beam ends, and land her and her cargo safe in the home port. It didn't seem possible that it could have been one of their descendants who now complained of the difficulty of navigating a four-wheeled vehicle around a stationary shaft in broad daylight and a dead calm!

Billy Clark was the watcher in the tower by day. In normal weather, Billy watched for the steamer, and as soon as she was in sight his horn gave the signal from the open windows, north, south, east, and west. By night there were two watchers in the tower. One was in Billy's place and the other below in the little room at the base of the tower, where there was a stove and the bell-rope. The two men changed places usually but once during the night, dropping little pegs at intervals into some sort of a machine that showed whether there had been a lapse in the watch. In very cold weather the watch was changed every hour.

The town was divided into four districts, Main Street being intersected for that purpose by Orange and Center Streets. In case of the discovery of fire, the first thing done by the tower watcher was to signal to the man below,

who at once seized the bell-rope and rang sixty-five strokes to alarm the sleepers — then the number of the district was struck and the clamor and clanging of all the church bells filled the universe.

Meantime the tower watcher had placed a bull's-eye lantern in the window facing the section where the fire was seen, and then running down the long steep stairway he was out in the street shouting 'Fire, Fire!'

The volunteer firemen dashed to the engine-houses, and the hand-pumped engines, hauled by the long, heavy rope, with wooden handles fastened at intervals throughout the whole length, two men at each handle, were soon on their way with bells jingling, and followed by the hose carts, also drawn by hand. The water supply for the engines was furnished by cisterns in those days, so that volunteer bucket brigades were very welcome at the fires. But the memory of The Fire (of '46) was still vivid in Nantucket. That hoarse cry of 'Fire!' and the town was aware of its peril! The response was immediate. The repertoire of sounds, pleasant and unpleasant, seems unending; but nobody, who has ever heard that cry of 'Fire!' just under the window in the blackness of the old Nantucket night, can ever forget the shock. It was like a blow. The whole body quivered with pain, the heart stood still, while the mind was suffocated in the effort

to adapt itself to the horror thrust upon it by the imagination.

I always regretted that I did not go to the fire when Frank Crosby's barn burned, for there were elements of excitement that evening. It was in the court back of the 'block.' The barn was filled with hay, and the heat was intense. Mrs. Chalfin was giving a small musicale that evening, and the whole party adjourned to the Macys' house in the block, so that when Professor Henry Mitchell arrived, he exclaimed as he entered, 'Anne, I heard that your house was on fire, but apparently it is only a ball!' Elma hearing from some passer-by that the 'block' was in danger, thought at once of the Macy house and dashed down the hill and up Orange Street as only Elma could dash in those days. By the time she got to Fanny's the roof had caught; and Fanny put a huge silver ladle into her hands saying excitedly, 'Take it, Elma — somewhere safe! It's our best one!' Elma, with no thought but of safety for the 'best one,' ran without stopping the whole way back to her house. No one was in the sitting-room, but opening her mother's bedroom door she found her mother in bed, asleep. So tiptoeing around to the other side she thrust the ladle between the feather bed and the husk mattress, and dashed back to the fire. No houses were burned, and Elma finally went home and to bed without seeing any of the fam-

ily. Next morning her father said to her mother, 'Mary, that husk mattress must be refilled. I never was so uncomfortable as I was last night. Must be a piece of stalk in there.'

Among the pleasant haunts that we frequented with Dr. Ben was the sail-loft, at the head of Commercial Wharf, for Ben and the old sail-maker were good friends.

Susie was just enough older than I to have been allowed as a child to take her dolls and her Cousin Lottie and go down and play for long afternoons in the loft, under the watchful eye of her Grandfather Coleman who for many years was one of the firm of sailmakers. Schieffelin, the younger member, measured and cut the canvas, and Grandfather Coleman sewed the long seams with such extraordinary skill and speed that his reputation spread far and wide. I don't believe that the quiet, dignified old gentleman that I later knew ever thought of himself as a 'champion,' nor do I think that record-breaking or endurance tests ever entered into his clear and placid mind.

But I had never heard of the sail-loft until Ben took me there. Eliza and I were too young to be allowed to include the wharves in our voyages of discovery. Little girls were not given the freedom that they now take. And so the interest and charm of the water-front were left for Ben to show me.

The old sailmaker, Schieffelin, had drifted down here when a boy, and falling under the spell of Nantucket, had never been able to get away. He had blond ringlets that reached his shoulders, and lovely blue eyes, a sunny sea-blue, clear and kindly and wise. And his voice was like his eyes, kindly and wise.

The floor of the loft was as smooth as if it had been rubbed down and polished by hand. The great brown shiny knots, chestnut brown, as large as a dinner plate, rounded up at least an inch in the middle, with the wearing away of the lighter fiber of the wood around them as the great sails of 'Rooshy duck' were dragged about. This Russian duck was preferred to all other, for its proved resistance to the power of wind and wave. Perhaps it is no longer made. We don't hear it mentioned now.

We loved to sit with Dr. Ben, who wasn't a doctor then, and old Schieffelin, at the open door on the east side of the high loft reached by climbing the long narrow stairs on the north outside, and close to the great roller over which the bales of canvas hoisted from below were hauled into the loft, and watch the deepening glow of the afternoon sunshine, the light slowly reddening over the Shimmo shore towards the purpling east; while from the low west windows of the loft the rays climbed to the rafters and then slipped slowly down, leaving twilight shadows over us as

we reluctantly left the great doorway from which, if we had known it, we could see the very spot in Squam where the great sail-loft would one day stand, to serve as a barn.

It is there now, useful no doubt. Sometimes as I have seen its many windows blinking in the sunset's afterglow as they looked townward to their old home on the quiet harbor, I have wondered whether they could see once more the heavy bales hoisted slowly over the great roller into the loft, and the miles of milk-white canvas unconsciously polishing the great floor as the sails took shape, and were carefully finished, first for the use of the Island ships to carry them wherever they willed to be, and then at last, reduced perhaps to a torn fragment, used to wrap the body of some sailor-lad as he slipped to his rest in the silent deep, far from his Island home. If a house has a personality, a sort of soul, then a sail-loft surely should have. And if a soul — why then a memory.

Not only in my memory, but in my very consciousness still lingers the spell of those afternoons, with the changing light, the lap of water far below, and the low-pitched, restful voices of the old sailmaker, and the Quaker-born youth who always used the plain language of the Friends, talking of Nantucket and the ships of long ago.

I can't remember when we girls began to go on

Saturday evenings to the Athenæum, as it was spelled by the great gold letters across the front of the building. Usually young girls were not seen on the street after dark until they were at least in their teens. They were then supposed to be old enough to go to the Athenæum and get the week's supply of books for their respective families. We, however, must have been rather younger when we began these errands. Always we seemed to be allowed privileges, or at least, not prevented from taking them. It was still the old Nantucket life, gradually dying out, but we were too young to realize the slow and steady changing of the old order into new and undreamed-of conditions. So we cheerfully packed the Athenæum books under our arms, sometimes gathering on the way an extra lot from neighbors who had no children, and who for some reason 'did not choose' to sally forth on that particular night. Perhaps it was 'too rough for them to lower.'

The patient librarian would help us in our selection of books, with the aid of her very remarkable memory, or her intimate knowledge of the characters and tastes of the prospective readers. Besides, many persons that we knew, elderly women — in their thirties perhaps — had private marks with which we soon became familiar. One person made a cross on a fly leaf that she might herself know at once whether she

had read the book. Another drew a circle around the printed number on page 50.

So we went up and down Main Street with big armfuls of books, and with happy greetings for our acquaintances, because Main Street was always populous on Saturday nights. Elma, who lived over on North Shore Hill — where she lives now in fact, only it is known as 'Cliff Road' — was always with us, coming down to Pleasant Street soon after supper for the customary visit to the Athenæum. We never spoke of it as the 'Library.'

The Athenæum that drew us out on Saturday evenings and so enabled us to enjoy the entertainment of Main Street was an institution much beloved by the Nantucketers. Its predecessor, with its valuable library, was destroyed in the Great Fire, and the energetic young men of the town at that time had erected on the same spot the dignified and imposing building that we knew. And now that its builders, those who were left, were 'getting along,' the Athenæum became more and more precious to them. It belonged to them, though the list of shareholders, like everything else, was slowly changing. Nothing relating to the Athenæum could ever be improved upon. It was a finished product, 'our Athenæum.'

The Library at the end of the long corridor facing the main entrance extended across the entire width of the building, from east to west,

and took about half the floor space. A door opened from the Library and also from the hall, into the 'west room' which was used for Proprietors' Meetings. On the other side of the corridor a corresponding door opened from the hall into the 'Museum.'

The collection consisted chiefly of articles brought home in the ships, from all parts of the world, most of them from the islands of the Pacific, many of these islands having been discovered by Nantucketers. There were two polar bears, huge shells, and a countless variety of weapons for the slaying of both beasts and men. The last janitor of the Athenæum who was also the custodian of the Museum was Henry C., a tall, heavily built man whose heart, his beautiful old mother used to say, matched his size. But his nerves had their limit of endurance. He had led a seafaring life and had risen to the rank of first mate. But by that time he was ready to retire from the sea and settle down with his mother and his brother, the famous 'Joe C.,' in their Nantucket home.

Sight-seers increased in number and variety as the town developed into a recognized summer resort, and Henry C.'s time was largely taken up at the Museum. He was always affable and readily answered the usual questions, and in the main enjoyed his visitors. But one day a nervous little woman, thirsting for information, arrived

alone. Henry C. convoyed her about the room, bearing patiently her innumerable questions and telling her everything she thought she wanted to know. As they finished the journey at the door, a party entered, and Henry C. began again. The first comer attached herself to this group and listened intently to the guide's explanations. Several more persons came in. Naturally Henry C. was obliged to repeat his descriptions, anecdotes, and all the rest.

The little woman became familiar with the facts, and, as still other visitors arrived, she began to add, from time to time, items omitted by Henry C. and at last she ventured to correct some of his statements, altered a bit from his original text owing to his increasing weariness. At last the worm turned. 'Madam,' he said, as he suddenly faced his tormentor, 'you have talked so much and made me so nervous that I don't know *what* I'm saying!'

Temporarily subdued but by no means conquered, she still followed with the rest. Presently he extracted from a pile of native weapons from the South Seas, a particularly murderous-looking knife of ugly and unusual shape, and as he held it out the little woman recovered her power of speech. 'Oh, what is that?' she exclaimed, and then reproachfully, she added, 'You've never shown me that before! Where did it come from and what is it for? Do tell me!'

'Madam,' said Henry C., and his long arm brandished the thing threateningly, 'Madam, this is a knife from the Cannibal Islands, and I wish to God I was there!'

Eventually both the east and west rooms became parts of the Library, the east alcove being used for bookstacks, and the west room was fitted for a reading room with a long table and racks for papers and magazines, while the wall space is now utilized for picture exhibits from time to time.

Proprietors' meetings after these changes were held in the main room. The presiding officer used to sit under the bust of Socrates, while over the secretary's chair, Benjamin Franklin surveyed with disinterested urbanity the group of persons assembled, among whom doubtless were many of his relatives.

But the time came when the old order was compelled to give place to a new one of an unimagined degree of desecration. The few remaining founders of the Post-Great-Fire-Athenæum, had to endure an indignity that gave to their white faces at the decisive public meeting a still more livid pallor. It was finally settled that although the Board of Trustees was still to manage the affairs of the Athenæum, the cherished Library was to become practically a 'Free Library.'

The white-haired, white-faced men and women have all gone. The town remains. The big hall

over the Library, also spoken of as the 'Athenæum' is much as it was when we danced, or posed, or recited upon its stage, or later on, sat among the audience on those pale-green, thoroughly comfortable settees, which have been replaced by a more modern style of seats or chairs, somewhat squeaky, and no more manageable than the settees.

CHAPTER XIII

MY HOUSE

'THERE isn't a room in your house that isn't pleasant,' said a visitor.

'They all are pleasant to me,' I answered, 'and, moreover, each room in my house has its special season, even its own moment.'

A large, plain bay window was eventually built on the north side of the house, giving more width to the sitting-room, a street outlook, and what was of greater value then either, plenty of light, and for most of the year the afternoon sunshine. For a few weeks in winter no direct rays enter, but in January Mother and I began to watch. Then on some sunny afternoon the high moment came. One of us would call to the other joyously. 'There it is, there's the sun!' And at the north corner of the west window a sunbeam shone warm for a little space and then faded out. Next day, a bit earlier, a moment longer — and spring was on the way!

When this bay window was built the whole end of the house was reshingled, and the last of the old handmade shingles were removed. These shingles, cut by slave hands from trees grown in cedar swamps, were about three feet in length and of the same thickness throughout. They

were brought north in coasting schooners, and given into the hands of men who, seated on a 'cooper's horse,' with a drawing-knife shaved down one end to the required thinness. They were fastened to the boarding with long, iron, handmade nails.

After the bay window was built, a further improvement was made by cutting a large doorway into the parlor. This room can be shut off if desired by a glass door, three-folding, so that when opened it stands in the corner by the mantel quite inconspicuously, usually not noticed at all.

After these changes the last and greatest was the removal of the big pump in the kitchen, over the well, and with the pump went much of the attractiveness of the old kitchen. For several years after water had been led into town, many persons kept to the use of well water from the deep, spring-supplied wells. They did not consider 'pond water' fit even for cooking purposes. Rain water was especially favored for laundry work. It was soft and whitening for clothes. It was brought into our kitchen in pails, having been pumped outdoors from our big cistern, and after being used, it was taken out in the same pails, carried to the farthest corner of the yard, and poured around the rosebushes.

All drains were far away from the house, and meticulously looked after. The water then from

our deep well, cool, sparkling, was used joyously without boiling as the most desirable of drinking waters.

As a family we used water copiously, and surely a great deal of effort was expended daily in pumping it with the great wrought-iron handle as big as a man's wrist. But we were used to it.

Then one summer a certain enteric ailment swept through the town, and although there were cases, even of death, among the users of 'pond water,' there were many more among those who used well water. There was of course a great hue and cry. The conservatives reiterated their early statements that 'what was good enough for my grandfather was good enough for me!' But the grandfathers were certainly dead; and cases of illness, often serious, multiplied daily. Our family still wielded the wrought-iron pump handle.

At last I, never as strong as I looked, always busy about many things, always enjoying life to the utmost, seldom resting, was suddenly stricken. 'Well water!' was the triumphant comment from 'pond water!' The family refused to consider such silliness.

Then Stepfather, practical, strong sea captain that he was (and the water that they drank on the ships!) had a dream! He dreamed that the illness of the beloved daughter of the house was

caused by drinking 'well water!' Whether this dream was a true warning, or a result of the mysterious movements of his subconsciousness, nobody in those days presumed to decide. But the doom of the old pump was sealed.

I think I was quite well before it was taken away, and I don't remember how my thirst was quenched meantime, but the pump went, and the big sink in which Brother and I had sailed boats, and the platform of heavy planks all around the pump, such a convenient place to sit when we came in at night after a drive or a sail, and the whole 'crowd' went to the kitchen for a bite! But the pump and its accessories had to go. The change didn't stop there — for the dresser which ran the length of the kitchen, and was really a cleverly concealed coal bin, the dresser where Brother's friends (and mine) loved to sit, watching Mother and me at our work, all talking incessantly while waiting for things to be 'done' for their sampling — this dresser had to sacrifice some of its length for the new sink and its pipes and faucets, so inharmonious with its surroundings.

Enough of the dresser was left between the enameled sink and the window beyond which sitters were not allowed for two or three girls or boys still to perch. There's only one of each now who ever sits on the dresser, and it is not to wait for rolls, or cake, or pie from the oven, because

they are not there. But coffee is still made at odd times, and the cakes of commerce, though not as good as Pound Rounds, are not to be despised.

I was, among other things, the breadmaker of the family. Mother didn't like any other white bread as well as mine. On the other hand I have never tasted any brown bread as good as hers, whether it was baked in deep pans as we first had it, or steamed in the more modern tin steamers. For a while when I was a child, some one 'over north' — only not very far over, for it was on Center Street, near the Congregational Church — used to sell baking-kettle bread, and sometimes I was sent there for a loaf. This was cooked in a sort of kettle, hung over a wood fire. The cover had a little rim an inch or so high, to hold the glowing coals that baked the top of the loaf. After that could not longer be procured, and Mother approved of my bread, she gradually ceased to make white bread at all.

My 'procrastination,' however, about 'making it up' — for we never spoke of 'mixing,' nor did we ever 'set a sponge' — was very trying to her. But I always seemed to have so much to do, and no time between, for I was no 'hustler.' Everything had to be done as well as possible before it was left for another piece of work. 'See that it will bear examination' — was Mother's frequent admonition.

So my breadmaking often was attended to after a festivity was over, and our own guests had departed, or after Mother had seen me safe in the house and heard the report of the evening, and had gone to bed. Then I would go out in the kitchen and make up the great batch of bread at the end of the dresser beyond the place where the sitters were allowed. One night Brother came out and sat watching me. I never 'messed,' so often I didn't put on an apron. That night I didn't. I wore black that night, a long, trained, black silk skirt, and a tight-fitting black velvet 'basque,' elbow sleeves and V-neck. A scarf of my favorite white tulle was crossed over my breast, surplice fashion, and there was a big bunch of sweet peas on my left shoulder; I went at my task deliberately, willingly, competently. It was a matter of course. Brother watched me for a while in silence. Presently he observed, 'When I'm married I'm going to have my wife make bread with a bunch of sweet peas on her gown.'

The well over which the pump stood was not filled up like the cistern, but was covered with heavy planks, and an entire new floor laid. Otherwise the kitchen looks about as it always has since I can remember, though there is no longer a row of kerosene lamps on the little shelf at the end of the dresser.

The care of the lamps was one of my duties, and it grew into an art and an accomplishment. 'Thy kerosene stove,' said Dr. Ben, 'is the only oil stove I ever smelt that didn't smell!' For besides the thirteen lamps required by the household, an oil stove was added when they were first introduced. It was used between seasons for warmth, or for heating water quickly. This was before gas was led into the house.

I can dimly remember certain glass lamps besides the small pewter ones, in which sperm oil was used, but by the time I was old enough to stay up after nightfall, the lamps generally had been fitted for kerosene. Some of them were very beautiful, especially the 'solar' lamp, with the great globe of ground glass, the design of grapes and leaves left clear. It had the usual set of prisms, and the shining, plain brass stem rose from a block of white marble. P. W. joyfully took it home with her one day. Gas is certainly more convenient, but our lamps were far more satisfactory in many ways. A good many of them were beautiful in themselves, and suited the environment perfectly, with the pleasant, clear light, the shining glass chimneys, and the old glass globes, or, for reading and sewing, the modern green or opaque white shades. But life seems to be a succession of choices. Otherwise the world would become an exaggerated 'thousand-year box' and no place to put it!

Several of the wide-boarded floors of the rooms have been replaced, and I have always hoped that some treasure might be found, but as this is the only house that ever stood on this spot, and as nobody at the time it was built had accumulated any extra money, the chances of treasure were meager.

Still, when a new floor was laid in the upper hall, the four-foot space under the boarding which was just over the original entry, was found to be filled with beach-sand. It rested on the laths and plaster of the wall underneath. There were eight coalhods of this sand. It was carefully sifted, but yielded only a few copper coins and leadies, and two or three bowls of small pewter spoons. All these unimportant articles are in the Museum of the Historical Association.

Rather a more valuable find was a watch key which was discovered between the plastered wall and the outer boarding when repairs were being made. It was probably not 'hidden,' as nothing else was found. It is a very decorative watch key, with a large amethyst set in a gold frame of charming design, and quite big enough for a pendant on a necklace, but as many of my guests have never seen a watch key 'in action,' I think that it gives more pleasure as it is, than an occasional sight of it as a pendant would.

Nobody would ever guess where the old well is, but the little chart fastened to the deed con-

veying the property from Walter Folger's heirs to Father indicates where it may be found by reversing the process of surveying, since the plot of land is surveyed from the well. I think that's a lovely idea. The refreshing, cleansing, life-giving spring, the very heart of the home to be, from which is measured first the boundary of the family life, the enclosure for the development of the personality, the individuality, of the members of this special group, whose gradually enlarging boundaries of interest and experience may end only with life itself! It has been said that

'Each man's chimney is his Golden Milestone,
Is the central point, from which he measures every distance
Through the gateways of the world around him.'

But at least the water from the spring is necessary to keep him alive while he builds the Golden Milestone!

And just here I recall a moment when a charming young woman was saying good-bye at my west door late in the season. The sunset sky behind the Macy elms suggested to me other lines of this same poem, and I quoted:

'their purple branches
Spread themselves abroad, like reefs of coral,
Rising silent
In the Red Sea of the winter sunset.'

Then I asked, 'Don't you think that is one of his loveliest?'

'I never heard it,' she replied.

'Why,' I exclaimed, 'your own grandfather wrote it!'

After I have apologized to the newcomer for not having been born in my house, and have explained why, and also why I am not now living in a 'mansion,' and sometimes even why I have not married — although my answers in this case seem less satisfactory, owing to their being more vaguely formulated — the next question strikes another note. 'How old is this house?' Again I am a disappointment because I do not know.

To us as a family, our interest in its past stopped with the Honorable Walter Folger — the 'Great Walter' — who, like the 'Great Mary,' filled the horizon, and whose personality overshadowed, or illuminated, according to one's temperament, all the foreground.

However, quite recently reading over the deed of conveyance to my father, signed by the Great Walter's children and their respective wives and husbands, I found that my house had been given to our Walter Folger by the will of his father, Walter Folger, Sr., whose own house was on Winter Street. The first Walter had bought the house in 1786 of John Cartwright.

In Henry Worth's 'Nantucket Land and Land Owners,' it is stated that John Cartwright owned the land from Summer Street to High Street, and

bounded on the east and west by Pine and Pleasant Streets. He probably built the house.

John Cartwright, who sold the house to Walter Folger, Sr., was Sister-in-law's great-grandfather, and his wife, Mary Starbuck, was sister to my great-grandfather Reuben, so it is quite in order that Father should have eventually come into possession of his great-aunt's house; but it is Walter Folger whose occupancy gave to the house its interest for us, and most of the historic value that it may possess for other people.

One of his sons, Edward R., I think the youngest of the eight children, was living in my day — that is, in my youth — and Mother always cherished a warm friendship for him and for his wife. I remember also his son Thomas Archimedes, a tiny old man, whose life Elma once saved by extracting from his throat with her long forefinger the gold ring which 'Aunt Judith' had coyly secreted in the cake served at some family party to which the little old gentleman had been invited under protest. Aunt Judith, his daughter, thought him quite too infirm to come to the party, but he had his own views. Come he did, and he got the ring, and did his best to swallow it. His efforts happily attracted Elma's attention, she rushed to the rescue, and by her untrained 'first aid,' she saved both the man and the ring.

But the name of Thomas Archimedes, whose

last appearance in society might have been, except for Elma's aid, his last appearance on earth, is never mentioned now. A few remain who remember Deacon Edward R., whose son, our lately lost but never-to-be-forgotten John B., loved to come to my house for tea, especially when the season required its being served in my little parlor, paneled on the fireplace side after the manner of the time, and wainscoted on the other three. And he would often tell us about the remarkable man in whose old workshop we were then sitting. Nantucket oak was said to have been used for the framing of the house, and the description of it in the old records as being 'unusually hard and of fine grain' has been fully borne out by the experience of carpenters and plumbers who have broken many a tool in their efforts to adjust modern improvements in spite of the resistance of these stand-patters of posts, beams, and joists of native stock.

In the southeast corner of the room four rectangular patches are inserted in the floor. That is where the wonderful astronomical clock was built by its inventor, the Great Walter. The patches show where holes were cut in the floor in which the legs were fastened to keep the structure plumb for the perfect adjustment of the delicate machinery of the clock. The legend is that when the topmost peak was to be put on it was found that there was not room under the

joists that met on the corner post. The clock could not be moved, so three-cornered pieces were somehow sawed out of the joists and after the clock was taken away the wedges were replaced. Mr. Folger said that it was 'just like Grandfather Walter, though he couldn't vouch for the truth of that story.' Neither can I, but I can show you the seams of the two wedge-shaped insertions in the oak joists, for many coats of paint have failed to remove all traces of the joining, probably done in 1790.

This clock, built in that year, is still in existence, keeping good time and functioning in many ways not usually known to clocks. The golden ball of the sun rises and sets daily at the proper time, the changes in the length of the day being regulated by some sort of machinery, while another mechanical contrivance keeps the moon steadily at work on her complicated job, which leaves her no time for the philandering attributed to her by modern poets who are apparently just making her acquaintance — along with so many other discoveries that perhaps their confusion is pardonable. There are several other feats performed by this wonderful clock, though it fails in some that required the oversight and intelligence of its maker when it was once taken apart for cleaning.

Whether the astronomical telescope was also made in my house I do not know, but from vari-

ous bits of apparently good evidence picked up here and there, the chances are in favor of its having been constructed in the same room as the clock. This telescope, now in the Museum of the Nantucket Historical Association, was the first made in America; and true to its New England origin it discovered spots on Venus that the Herschel telescopes had failed to observe.

Where a south door led from Walter's workshop to the yard, is now a window, but the small door leading to the hall is still in its place, with its two 'lights' at the top. Some of my guests have to bow their haughty heads upon entering my little parlor, for the door is but six feet high.

When the big chimney was taken down, and the story is that there were enough bricks left after building the small chimney to pay for all the work, the fireplace was plastered up, and for many years there was a stove set under the row of Dutch tiles. Then a Franklin fireplace was found, from an old house in New Bedford, that could be fitted. The work was beautifully done by a mason, who as he sat thoughtfully watching the flames of the first fire on the new hearth, at last said longingly, 'I want a fireplace in my own house. My wife can't see what I want it for, but I tell her that it is because I am a lover of beauty and a dreamer of dreams.' Do masons at fifteen dollars a day have that kind of souls?

The north side of my house must have been altered a good deal, for the original hall or entry was only about four feet square, and it was necessary to step on the stair to close the door comfortably. Probably there was a closet or even a very small room where the present hall and staircase are, and beyond that the living-room with the large fireplace and two windows, four small panes in width. The house stopped there.

In this small house without the present ell, and without the front room, the valiant Ruth, wife of the Great Walter, brought up eight children. And they were well brought up, in spite of the fact that she was often hard put to it to find the materials for a meal, when Walter, sent to market, would forget his errand and stop at the hardware shop and spend what money he had for something needed by the invention then under way.

One day when he had offended in this way, he added to his misdemeanor by bringing home a stranger to share the dinner which he had omitted to provide. There was hardly a visitor to Nantucket of any intellectual tendencies or acquirements, whatever, who didn't find his way to Walter Folger's house, and it was a matter of course that he should join the family at the next meal. On this occasion apples formed the only course of the banquet, after which the

guest observed with entire sincerity that he had seldom enjoyed such a delightful and satisfactory meal. From what I know of Walter's descendants I can readily believe this tale. But Walter's idiosyncrasies seemed to trouble some of the neighbors more than they bothered his wife. One venturesome woman was moved to commiseration on a certain occasion, and observed that Walter must be very trying with his queer ways. Ruth answered with serenity, 'Yes, he is, and I sometimes wish that he didn't know any more than thy husband.'

Around the big chimney a narrow passage led from the living-room into the bedroom beyond. Some architects think from the markings on the corner posts that there were two small bedrooms, and that the partition had been taken down. I know that afterwards a room ten feet square was the space once covered by the chimney. Later on that partition was removed, giving a bedroom twenty-one feet in length, with two east windows and one on the south. On one side of this window is the large clothes-press with its own window besides the two door 'lights,' and this is balanced on the other side of the window by a bathroom.

At one of the east windows is a hinged writing-table of Everett Manter's clever contrivance after my first suggestion. He used to say that he had done many queer things for people, but none so queer as the things he had done for me!

In April I bring my breakfast tray to the hinged table, and so from that window watch daily the coming to life of my apple tree, and the shrubs of my garden, the brightening gold of the sunshine, the deepening blue of the shadows. My place, from the northeast corner of the garden fence to the street gate at the end of the little path, seems saturated with the very essence of my life, a life filled to the brim with experiences that 'angels might covet,' together with many of a different sort, common to mortals. And yet all this with no spectacular effect, and nothing that would deserve mention in a Year Book!

The Folger living-room became our sitting-room, though at first it was intended by the family for a dining-room and was always used as such for the big tea parties, relationary and otherwise, that we had for a good many years.

As there was no 'kitchen' all the time that Walter Folger's wife was bringing up her eight children, Father had the building at the back of the lot, which had been the first woolen mill on the Island, and afterwards was Walter Folger's boat-building shop, brought up and put down over the well, and so joined to the main house. Mr. Henry Coffin, who with his brother Charles planted the elms on Main Street, and lived to see their great Gothic arches high above the house-tops, told me that he remembered coming

to that mill when he was seven years old; and beloved Henry Coffin died many years ago.

This building had two stories, the lower one being converted into our dining-room and kitchen; and over the dining-room, a room was finished off that was called the 'porch chamber.' In most old houses the porch chamber was over the kitchen, in the ell; but the corresponding space over our kitchen was left just as it was in the days when it was the workshop of Walter Folger. We always called it the 'shop-chamber,' until so many persons came here to whom the term had to be explained, with the long story behind it, that we adopted the more familiar name 'workshop.' Indeed that was what it was used for. Stepfather had the usual stock of ordinary tools and of course attended to all the minor repairs about the place. It was there that he also made Nantucket lightship baskets. Stepfather's work was a labor of love. His baskets were beautifully made, and all our friends were fitted out with little workbaskets, or egg baskets, and sometimes he would make the whole nest of seven for some favorite among the many young people who came to our home.

The boys did their jigsaw work in the shop-chamber. And when the boys were old enough their guns were cleaned here. It was also the 'smoking-room,' as Mother never allowed smoking in the rest of the house. Of course when

the gun-and-smoking period had arrived, the girls also found the shop-chamber an attractive place, with the comfortable old armchairs, and rockers, discards from 'below,' and the big canvas hammock, with the wonderful netted ends and long fringes of fine rope, where the great rope-covered metal rings were fastened. This hammock was Stepfather's own work and had made at least one voyage with him around Cape Horn. The shop-chamber has eight windows of four different shapes and sizes. One is on hinges and almost as large as a door. Probably in the days of woolen mill or boat-builder's shop it was used for hoisting cumbersome stuff up to that floor. With this door-window wide open, as well as the regular windows, where the grape leaves against the moonlight cast their shadows on the bare floor, it was a fascinating place for us all to listen to the tales of Stepfather and the boys, of the birds they did, or didn't, get on the last 'cruce.'

Many years afterwards, Stepfather and our beloved Dr. Ben used to spend long hours together in the shop-chamber amid the accumulations of the years, which had not yet been sorted out for destruction. The fishlines still hung in the northwest corner, the guns were still in the racks, the duck decoys still roosted on the great beams, and the plovers still poked their sharp bills out of the gunny bags.

But when the fragrance of Stepfather's pipe and dear Dr. Ben's cigarette no longer filled the place; when the boys, scattered far and wide, no longer came 'home' for vacations, the shop-chamber was tidied up, losing much of its attractiveness with the 'clutter' that was taken away.

Gradually the studio is becoming more obviously what its name implies. There's a rug on the floor, and a modern hammock. The old one, no longer patchable, and indeed with nobody to be found in the town who could patch it, finally came to pieces. The walls, always covered by Brother and me with pictures from magazines and illustrated papers, are now being decorated with half-finished sketches, among which are several portraits of me — some finished and rather poor; one, unfinished, very interesting, because it is said to be a combination of the Mona Lisa and Julius Cæsar.

And so the shop-chamber goes on gathering experiences from year to year. If as Whittier suggests, there may be 'No death for a word once spoken,' and 'Never a deed but left its token,' perhaps science some day may reveal many interesting episodes of the years since the material for the clothes in which the Honorable Walter Folger went to the Legislature and to Congress was woven under the great brown beams, on one of which a few decoy ducks still

perch. One of 'Grandfather Walter's' sons bore the anachronistic name of Alexander Mirabeau. Quite as remarkable is the sequence of his activities on one occasion requiring fresh apparel. He is said to have taken from the attic — my attic — a fleece of wool. He cleaned it, carded it, and combed it, he wove it and dyed it and cut it and made it and pressed it, and got into it and was married. Potentially, a high-tariff man!

There's only one left now of our three Isabella grapevines. And when the season is long enough for the fruit to ripen fully, it still seems to me, as it has seemed all my life, that no other grape can compare with this royal Isabella. The vine covers one whole side of the house. In spite of its many years, it still bears well, but not as abundantly as in the old days when it was as relentlessly, as it was lovingly, cared for.

In June I remember, as soon as the heavy, delicious fragrance of the blossoms had gradually blown out to sea — all that hadn't been inhaled with widened nostrils and grateful hearts — and the deep rose-pink, dew-gathering margins of the silvery green leaves had changed with the silver to a firmer texture and darker hue, and the fruit was set, like tiny branches of young peas — little earrings of unpolished jade — then there was careful pruning, and tacking of the

young branches and new shoots. Only a certain number of joints was allowed for each shoot, along the heavier branches which were trained in right angles. The non-bearing suckers were lopped off, and the vine was left to absorb the warmth and moisture of the early summer.

Late in July there was another careful pruning, more suckers were snipped off, any too vigorous growth of foliage on the fruit-bearing shoots was also lopped off; and at last the vine was ready to bask in peace in the hot August sunshine, and through the hazy, gentle warmth of September ripening its deep purple grapes with a bloom matching in gray softness the September haze itself.

Then a few days of crisp October, with its hint, perhaps its touch, of frost. And then the picking and sorting of the great heavy bunches, the best for neighbors and friends and any one who was ill. Sometimes entire branches were cut off close down to the big main vine, both ends of the stem were sealed with resin, and the branches were hung on huge nails on the overhead beams of the little, round, stone-walled 'butter cellar.' There they would stay until Thanksgiving, the grapes losing little of their firmness and none of their sweetness.

But now the old vine is pruned and cared for by other hands, gentle and skillful and faithful hands, and trained originally at the 'far-off,

UNDER THE ISABELLA GRAPEVINE

flashing bright Azore,' reluctant to impose the stern, New England discipline upon anything as naturally beautiful as a grapevine, with its tendency to curves, rather than angles. All now is changed. Instead of an almost unbroken, heavy covering of great dark-green leaves, with glimpses at regular intervals of ripening fruit, entirely hiding the shingles of the house, there are fine masses of foliage, beautiful straying shoots and branches swaying gently or violently in the wind, and up in the corner where the ell joins the main house there's a still heavier massed growth where the birds build their nests, and peck at and spoil the grapes. Along the eaves of the ell there's a cornice of living green, delicate in design, that catches with its graceful tendrils, every whiff of breeze, and the constantly changing effects of light, and is really a thing of entrancing beauty.

The people who gather in that particular corner of the garden for tea or coffee, for talk and laughter, are enthusiastic over the grapevines. Then I get out the old photographs and show them how the Isabella was trained in the days when no better outdoor grapes than ours were grown on the Island. They are not impressed. They knew not Joseph. The vine is beautifully decorative, they say. So it is; as for fruit, they would like just as well the Hartford Prolific grapes on the other side of the house,

that are sweet and juicy, fully ripe in mid-September. A good grape as grapes go, and I have eaten many grapes, even in California, and that is why I cherish the Isabella.

CHAPTER XIV

SOME OF US

PLEASANT STREET'S Cousin Rebecca lived to be ninety-four years old, and kept her mind to the last. Since she had never seen an Island steamer, nor indeed had she ever been 'afloat' as she put it, she might be referred to as a person who had had no 'early advantages.' This lack, however, never seems to have been 'perceived,' as we Islanders say, by those who had the privilege of knowing her. She on the other hand had no 'perceivance' of superiority in those who had traveled.

I never remember seeing her anywhere but in her sitting-room or in the tiny kitchen. Cousin Rebecca always wore dark gowns and rather elaborate black lace caps and these caps were worn until they faded to a brownish gray. When Anne, her cousin and housekeeper, couldn't stand the old cap another day, Mother was summoned to 'speak to' the old lady. I was never present at these interviews, but the immediate result was a fresh black lace cap with shiny dark satin ribbons.

Anne also recommended more frequent sweeping of the ingrain carpet of the side room, especially during the reign of the winter stove.

Cousin Rebecca resented this suggestion on the part of her cousin-housekeeper, and complaining to Mother, remarked, 'Lois, when my carpet gets observably dirty, I have it swept!' That seems a simple system to follow, and I understand is not unknown among us even in this later generation.

Cousin Rebecca never used her parlor, with the two wide small-paned windows on the street. But Anne so missed seeing the 'pass' that a grudging consent was given for her to sit there on Sundays when the street showed more signs of life than on weekdays. The condition attached to this favor was that Anne should lay a causeway of newspapers from the hall door to her favorite window, and walk only on that, carefully keeping her feet on the paper while she sat in the best rocker. After this carnival, the hall door was closed for the week.

Yet Cousin Rebecca had a kindly heart. One winter the Honorable Charles O'Conor rented a house on Pleasant Street while his own was being built on the Cliff. Cousin Rebecca was much disturbed that this lonely old man should be looked out for only by two Irish maids. And one whole forenoon this rheumatic old lady sat patiently by her kitchen stove, opening the oven-door from time to time and carefully basting a roast of Nantucket fresh pork that the 'poor man' might taste the delicacy, cooked as it should be cooked, and not 'burnt up by that Irish girl!' A generous

portion was sent to the 'poor man,' who I trust appreciated both the pork and the motive of the sender.

Anne perhaps would not have been a satisfactory recipient of such a gift. Once when Mother sent a hot apple pie to Cousin Rebecca, Anne took it and remarked, 'What ails Lois? Does she think I've lost my faculties?' No, Mother knew that Anne was still 'faculized,' but Mother's pies were of a special brand, as was everything she did.

'Aunt Eliza' was of a different type from Cousin Rebecca. Tall, slender, gentle, carefully dressed, her sense of humor hidden by a manner so impressive as to discourage any such sense in another person, her control of a situation was absolute.

Her husband, to whom she was devoted, was lame. After his death an old friend ventured to say, 'Eliza, how could you marry a man with one leg shorter than the other?'

Aunt Eliza opened wide those beautiful brown eyes, and said simply, 'Why, I never noticed it!'

'Did you ever know those people who have moved up near us?' some one queried. 'Yes,' said Aunt Eliza serenely, and without malice, 'nice people, but obscure.'

When she was quite old and moved slowly, she was at a funeral, and after the service was escorted to a carryall into which the man some-

what awkwardly proceeded to help her. Aunt Eliza drew back and said gently but coldly, 'I wish no assistance, but I cannot be hurried.' And, in passing, Susie thinks that it was her son, the famous Joe C., who when asked if he had attended a certain funeral, replied, 'No, I didn't attend it, but I approved it.'

Once when one of Aunt Eliza's social equals appeared at her front door, she opened it herself, the maid being out. The visitor's surprise and disappointment were obvious, also her embarrassment as she asked if the maid were at home. Aunt Eliza, guessing her errand (and rightly) said that Ella was not in the house, and added with her stateliest manner, that her 'servant's callers usually went to the back door.'

Another carefully dressed person was conspicuous among others whose toilets showed equal finish, only because we knew just how many pins she used to achieve the desired effect. There were seventeen of these pins required by her Quaker costume, which had no hooks and eyes, nor buttons. These seventeen pins of different sizes were arranged each night on her bureau, or probably dressing-table, in the order in which they were to be used. And they were unfailingly used in that order. The most remarkable detail of this story seems to me that the number of pins removed at night should be the same as the number inserted in the morning.

'Did you ever know him?' was asked by one old woman of another. 'Well,' was the reply, 'I used to see him sometimes long ago, but I shouldn't know him now if I met him in my porridge-dish!'

Another person, a woman, must have been more strongly individualized. 'Ever see her?' was the question.

'I'm not sure,' was the reply. 'I can't quite remember.'

'Well,' said the first speaker, 'then you never. She was so homely that if you'd ever seen her once you'd know her ashes!'

'W. G.'s chin,' said Stepfather, 'looks just like the cut-water on a clipper ship!'

Elma's family, living on the road between two popular hotels, often had callers at inconvenient hours. They took means to protect themselves. Said Sarah, one day to a favorite, 'After you've rung, and then tried the door and found it locked, you'd better speak, for I shall probably be right behind it!'

We used to know a Quaker bachelor who was so good to children that it seemed a pity that he had none of his own. It was years after his death that we heard of the romance of his youth. We then found that he had once tried whaling, and finally was shipped as boatsteerer. Before he

left home for that voyage he became engaged to a young Quakeress. Alas, when his time of trial came in the boat out for a whale, he flung the harpoon — and missed! That settled the matter of whaling for him. Unfortunately, the news of this disaster got to Nantucket before he did. So after his arrival when he went to see his sweetheart she received him coldly, and said that she couldn't marry him. He anxiously asked why.

'Didn't thee miss thy whale?'

'Yes,' he answered dejectedly.

'Then,' she said, 'I can't marry thee.'

And so that gentle soul walked all his life the 'solitary way.' It was bad luck to miss his whale, but I'm not so sure about the other disappointment.

Anna Jenks started out one day when the streets were a glare of ice. She made her way with great caution as far as the little shop where Eliza and I sold the horseshoes. She stopped there and asked William if he had a cane or an umbrella that she could borrow, for she must go on.

He went out into the junk-room, and finally came back with a harpoon. 'There, Anna, thee take that,' he said. 'It's the best I can do for thee.' So Anna started out with the harpoon, and she said that she 'played' that she was out after a whale. She would jab the harpoon into the ice,

and pull herself up to it, and start again. 'Now,' she added with a twinkle in her bright eyes, 'don't you go and write to the papers that the Nantucket women use harpoons for walking sticks!'

One privilege was ours which later generations, alas, can never enjoy. It was the experience of hearing the lowest depths of scorn expressed by the Nantucket woman by just two monosyllables. Come to her with a voluble enthusiasm about somebody or something, by which you wished to win her interest or approval; or some proposition which seemed to her 'hifalutin' or 'outlandish,' some criticism even, of herself, heard from outside, she never stopped for a second in what she was doing, whether it was taking a pie out of the oven, or tearing off sheets from a bolt of Wamsutta cotton as she sat with billows of it around her — your tale was finished! She simply said 'Cat's foot!' and went on with her occupation. Absolute scorn. Beautiful because perfect; and besides being taught to do things so 'They will bear examination,' we were taught the noble principle, 'Cut square, if the shavings fly in your face!'

Nicknames were common on Nantucket in the old days, and because of the general familiarity with the habits of the victims, the disposition, or the common ancestry, these nicknames were

often illuminatingly descriptive. For instance, 'Timepiece T.' tells its own story. Also 'Steady Bill' — who wasn't! I knew 'Ned Ninepence' as a clever elderly lawyer, but I didn't know why he was 'Ninepence.' He was not a cheap person. I did not know 'Alec Egg,' but Brother's boys did.

As often happens with members of the same family, the Islanders were given to a sort of badinage that sometimes approached abuse, and which certainly would not have been tolerated from a 'stranger.' There was hardly a family party without its 'table cards' of doggerel referring to the well-known peculiarities of the guests.

This love of teasing, apparently innate in children, and fostered perhaps by the free speech of the Islanders, once brought an experience to Elma and Clifford which they never forgot. There was a Cousin Lydia in Elma's family, often called Cousin Lyddy by her intimates, and Elma especially rejoiced in the diminutive which tickled both her ear and her fancy.

One day Elma's next older sister summoned Elma and Clifford from their play, with the threat, 'You're going to get it! Father wants you both right away. Cousin Lydia has made a complaint!'

A complaint! The children were terror-stricken. They knew quite well what they had done. But 'complaint' seemed to indicate depths

of guilt beyond their intention or even imagination.

'Do you suppose we'll have to go to jail?' whispered Elma as they reluctantly went toward the house.

It was afternoon and two or three of the aunts were placidly knitting with Elma's mother in the sunny sitting-room. Elma's father in his big chair looked impressive enough as he began solemnly, 'I have received a complaint from Cousin Lydia about your behavior to her on three occasions, when she has called to you to do an errand, and you have not only refused to obey, but have danced up and down quite out of reach, and have used ribald language.' He paused, his piercing black eyes under the bushy eyebrows full upon the culprits. 'Ribald language!' he repeated. 'Now what did you say to Cousin Lydia?'

The two children shrank under the combination of that piercing look and the term 'ribald,' which was new to them and mysteriously awful.

'Well! Out with it!' was the order.

Elma found courage to pipe up and answer rather shakily. 'We said, "Lyddy the biddy, the rick-stick stiddy."'

There was silence in the room, broken only by the click of the knitting-needles, and the somewhat labored breathing of Elma's father. One of the aunts coughed, and choked; she sounded

as if she were going to cry. The children could hardly breathe as they waited. Another aunt dropped her spectacles and had difficulty in finding them on the floor.

Then Elma's father with some effort uttered the words, 'That all? What else?' This time it was Clifford, more nervous, higher strung than Elma, but plucky, who stated that there was one more 'line.' And this was the addition —

'Lid, the bid, the rick stick stid.'

'I must think it over,' said Elma's father, feeling for his handkerchief. Presently he spoke, slowly, sternly.

'Let this be lastly! Never again let me hear a complaint from any lady, of insults by you two children. Ribald language, indeed! Remember, this is lastly' — a pause, 'You may go.'

The children slunk out, wondering at a sort of confusion of sound behind them as they closed the door. Was he after all going to do something? They waited. Nothing happened. But they remembered. It was 'lastly.'

One of my grandfathers, I think that it must have been Great-Grandfather Reuben, was making a tour of inspection over his farm, accompanied by one of his brothers. Presently the farmer stopped with an exclamation, 'Look yonder,' he said, pointing to a place where a portion of a fence lay flat on the ground. 'Those

rascally boys have been at my melons again!' 'Don't thee be hasty, Brother!' said the visitor. 'Probably it was the wind. Thee knows it blew a living gale last night.'

'So it did,' dryly observed the farmer. 'Thee sees the fence fell to windward!'

'Orlando,' said Stepfather, 'you made a mistake about this suit of clothes.'

'What's the matter with 'em? Don't they fit?'

'Yes, they do. That's it!' said Stepfather.

Orlando's shop was on Main Street, in one of the one-story wooden buildings put up for temporary use after The Fire, and taken down only a few years ago, and replaced by brick buildings also of one story. Around the corner, a short distance up Fair Street, in front of the Quaker Meeting House, stands a rectangular marble post with conical top, marking the southern extremity of the town's meridian line, the northern point being indicated by a corresponding post just in front of what was the sitting-room window in the days when the cashier's family 'lived in the bank.' It is a sunshiny spot all day long, and was most conveniently placed for Orlando, who after sponging and pressing some article of wearing apparel, would run across the street and drape the garment smoothly over the marble form where it could dry without a wrinkle. I wish that

I could see one of Orlando's creations drying there in these days!

In our childhood our mothers and other elderly persons wore shawls and capes for the street. Raglans had disappeared, and suits had not come in, nor long coats. A few women who had very fine figures occasionally favored mantles, but they required an arrangement about the shoulders and hips that was not attainable by the average woman. Double capes were chosen for, not by, young girls. In winter some of us had borders of fur, and heavy quilted satin linings.

Then came a transition period of dolmans, most unbecoming to both youthful and elderly figures. During that period I was for the first time allowed to choose my winter wrap. Sharley and I went to Boston and with the help of a cousin who lived there we chose a black dolman with a huge bow of wide black moiré ribbon on the back below the waistline. It was a hideous garment and I had an idea that it was not the style for me. And when I arrived home I was sure of it, for Mother said so. Not all my assurances that the cousin had approved it as the latest fashion had the slightest effect upon Mother. However, I wore the garment that winter, though Mother's smile when I appeared in it some way had more effect upon my mind than my eloquent defense of the 'latest fashion' had had on hers.

After the trig 'tailor-mades' appeared, and for summer wear the little black lace jackets, youth resumed the natural jauntiness that had been obscured for a time by those awful dolmans. We still wore several petticoats, and in winter the outside one was often a 'quilter.'

For the house an apron seemed to be necessary as a last touch to the toilet. Black silk was used by the older women, but dotted muslin, or fine crossbar, was our choice. Tatting and crocheted lace were used for trimming, and colored ribbon often replaced the narrow ties of the material. We were never without some fancy work in our hands in the afternoon when we were supposed to be quite at 'leisure,' and the apron protected the front of the dress from gathering threads and ravelings, lint from worsted work on canvas, or knitting. Nothing would have induced us to appear on the street with any sort of an apron. They were for home wear only, and to be seen only by those privileged to enter those homes intimately. If a 'stranger' called, the apron was whisked off before the person could be received.

But there were certain people who felt quite differently about aprons. For them an apron was as necessary as a collar of some kind, or as powder puff and lipstick of to-day. I remember going with one of the girls on some errand to see some people whom I had not known, and hearing the daughter of the house give her views about

aprons. 'I use No. 40 when I knit lace for myself,' she said; '40 is so dressy! I put it on all my white aprons for afternoon. Never feel dressed without an apron. When I have a white one on, trimmed with lace, I can run over to the grocery store if I want to. I'm all ready for that, or to see company.'

Lovely Helen used to say, 'If I can have a well-fitting, becoming dress with a long train, I am ready for any social emergency.'

And a certain Lizzie would say, 'Give me a black silk dress, a barrel of flour and a ham, and I am equipped for anything life may bring.'

Such valiant souls hardly needed the ballot as an additional weapon against fate.

Year by year that First and Fifth Day procession of Quakers up Fair Street, grew more sparse and scattering. The congregation oftener sat in silence as the more gifted speakers died, until at last only two members remained to hold a meeting in the old Meeting House.

This building was originally a Quaker schoolhouse, a parish school in fact, for the children of the Meeting whose place of worship was the far larger Meeting House that stood next south of the schoolhouse. As Quakerism began to decline and this special congregation of Orthodox Quakers diminished, the Meeting House was taken down, carried to Cape Cod and set up for a

schoolhouse, and a Nantucket woman taught in it. Then the schoolhouse was slightly altered, chiefly by removing half the floor of the second story where the girls were taught, and making the other half into a sort of gallery with sliding shutters, which was used for business meetings. Seats for the Elders of the Meeting were in the rear of the room, raised by two steps from the floor where were placed two rows of plain wooden benches, or settees, since they did have backs, divided by a narrow aisle. On the south side the woman sat, and the men on the north.

Curiously enough Eliza and I used to like to go to meeting occasionally with Eliza's grandmother or my Great-Aunt Phebe. We rarely heard speaking, for the Friends preach only when 'it is given them.' It was good training in the principle of not saying anything unless one has something to say. Of course the other lesson has to be learned later — the trick of saying something when there isn't anything to say. That also is a worth-while accomplishment. The midweek meeting was just as much a matter of course as the regular Sunday Meeting, and almost as well attended. James Austin for instance would leave his little shop on Main Street open with nobody in charge, and go to his place on the Elders' Bench in the Meeting House with unfailing regularity, and sit the hour through as placidly as if he hadn't a care in the world.

Mrs. Barnes waiting one day in the shop for his return, ventured to expostulate with him on his carelessness, saying that any one might help himself to money or any small articles and make off with the spoils in his absence without fear of detection. James looked at her gravely and asked, 'Is thee honest?'

'Indeed I trust so,' she replied.

'Other people are like thee,' observed James simply.

James was very tall and had a large head which he would bend forward a bit that he might look over his spectacles at the person talking with him. He was a kindly soul, but I never happened to see him smile. Mother said to him one day, 'James, I hear that you have some old brass candlesticks for sale.' James looked down at her and replied, 'Thee hears a great many things that are not so, and this is one of them.' Mother laughed, and presumably James had a moment of satisfaction. Of course it saves time to say 'Nope,' but James was not bent on saving time. He used it to create an atmosphere.

James and Huldah were the members of that Meeting who held together the last service in the old Meeting House, literally a service of 'waiting.' James asked Huldah to come up from her usual place and sit with him, on the women's side of the Elders' Bench, but she didn't feel that she was 'worthy'; so as the Spirit moved neither

of them to speak they 'waited in silence before the Lord' for the customary hour, and then there was a quiet handshake, a gentle farewell, and they parted, as it happened, not to meet again on earth.

It was a chilly, stormy day, and James, an old man, took a cold which rapidly developed into a serious illness and in a very short time Huldah was the only surviving member of that Meeting. She died not long afterwards, and hers was the last Quaker funeral on Nantucket. I remember the sort of day it was, soft, moist and gray in early spring, and as we walked to the house on the western edge of the town, the petulant gusts of a 'smoky sou'wester' blew gritty clouds of dust from the road, and swept from the shelter of steps and fence posts the little heaps of dead leaves and last year's grass.

A sad and uncomfortable day. But there was no crape on the door of the house to draw attention to the sorrow within; and on entering everything looked as usual, the comfortable rocking-chairs, all just the same, except in the little parlor where Huldah lay in the plain casket used by the Friends. There we gathered as we had for so many years, in the quietly cheerful, friendly room, but the strong spirit that used to dominate the group always was now at rest. There were no flowers about her; no attempt to soften the austere simplicity of the inevitable; no attempt

to conceal the chasm that must separate the living from those whom we agree to call dead. So we sat silently waiting for the Holy Spirit if perchance a word should be given.

Just across the room opposite me, were the Friends who had been expected from away, and one of them was a conspicuously handsome man. A powerfully built person, above the broad shoulders a noble head and a broad white face. I hoped that he hadn't seen my little start at first sight of the majesty of his beauty. It was a face of power, of serenity, of wisdom and sweetness. The pale, clean-shaven face was vitalized by eyes as blue as the sea, wide apart, impenetrable, inscrutable. His clean-cut nose was splendidly set; and his wide mouth, with lips whose curves and texture were those of a boy, was firmly closed above the well-moulded chin. I stared, fascinated, while the tall clock in the hall ticked, loud and slow, with dignity and assurance; and the little clock on the mantel ticked with a sharper and quicker note, as if nervous at the prolonged stillness.

Next this old man sat a younger woman whose dark eyes and fresh coloring lost nothing from the setting of the Quaker bonnet. From time to time she glanced rather anxiously at the old man beside her. On her other side sat her husband, as I afterwards found. He was middle-aged perhaps, his hair iron-gray, and his thick bushy eye-

brows over piercing dark eyes — a striking face, but just now quiet with eyes downcast. Presently the great bulk of the older man raised itself slowly and he began to speak. His voice was low, resonant and penetrating. He spoke briefly of his old friend Huldah, her strong character, her life of good work, especially among the Indians, her peaceful later years and her sure reward. A few sentences, a few quotations from the Bible, and he sat down as if he had come to the end of his strength — ghastly pale, but without a tremor. It was plain that he was very ill.

I had quite forgotten the other visitors in my interest in this man; but after a short period of silence while the clocks ticked, solemn and slow, quick and nervous, the younger man rose. He was quite a different type, slender, of about medium height, his movements showing nervous energy, his voice emotional but controlled. He began by reciting almost the whole of the Ninety-First Psalm; then he seemed to yield himself to his inspiration, but with hand always on the lever, ready to check the rising excitement, as his words flowed more freely. He swayed slightly as he spoke, and his voice swung into the rhythm, almost a chant, that was not unusual among the inspired ministers of this Society of Friends. The present speaker, like so many others, seemed to be unconscious of anything but his message, as

he went on weaving sentences from the Gospels into the fabric of his own words, his voice rising and falling in wonderful cadences, and as he finished with the words 'Come unto me and I will give you rest,' his voice swung up to a high note with the word 'rest,' and stopped suddenly, leaving it there, suspended in mid-air in a hush, an expectancy, that was most impressive.

He sat down and gradually the tension relaxed, and then the old man with the dignity of a king, but with Quaker simplicity, rose, and led the way to the carriages waiting before the door. I was placed with two women whom I knew well, and the younger of the preachers. It was a short distance to the Quaker Burying-Ground, but long enough to hear the familiar grating sound of the wheels turning slowly in the coarse sand of the road. We all got out and gathered about the open grave while the casket was placed in position, and as we stood in the long unkempt grass flattened by the gusts of wind, the young minister stepped forth from the little group and spoke again. I had never happened to hear any speaking at the grave by the Friends, and it seemed a curious thing to happen. Again a sermon was preached, but shorter than the first, and apparently because the man had to do it.

As we all took our seats in the carriages once more after the prayer that we might 'be at home in peace with Thee,' I saw that the man was

trembling and trying to control himself. After a while I asked if speaking like that didn't leave him exhausted. He was now quite himself and answered with perfect serenity, 'No, not exhausted, but thee remembers when the Saviour asked of the multitude who had touched Him, for virtue had gone out of him. I have felt that,' he added simply.

When we went back again into the house I met the wonderful old man who had so impressed me. And his ready friendliness was as gracious as his appearance was majestic. One of the family observed that Joseph's doctor was very much against his coming to Nantucket; but his only comment was 'I promised Huldah.' Then looking affectionately at the rosy-cheeked Quakeress he said, 'She is looking after me.' He took both my hands in his when I left, and after a few words of appreciation his 'fare thee well' was a blessing that I have never forgotten.

We were not to see him again; his doctor had known his condition. We heard of his death a short time afterwards.

I have seen the younger man since, for he has been instrumental in holding three meetings in the Fair Street Meeting House. Alas, he now is among the 'old,' those who love best to 'remember.'

CHAPTER XV

WITH PASSING YEARS

Our Nantucket had not then been listed as a 'dead town,' in the days of getting our growth as well as our education, but she was falling asleep, and already perceptibly drowsy. The Civil War over, the period of reconstruction did not directly affect Nantucket. The battered boys had come home for repairs, sometimes only for the 'Ave atque Vale,' but those who recovered from weariness or disease went away again to seek more remunerative employment than Nantucket could offer. No longer was it a matter of course for boys to learn a trade and then go to sea, with the idea of some day having a ship of their own; or sometimes after learning a trade, to enter a counting-house, and there learn the duties and responsibilities of shipowners, which at one period included local shipbuilding. And, moreover, no longer was it a matter of course that the young women should stay at home, for it wasn't then possible to earn a living by making flags and pennons for the ships as in the old days. Nantucket's activities were over, and her boys and girls went away as soon as they were old enough.

From time to time an effort would be made by some interested person to introduce an industry

that might serve to 'keep our young people on the Island.' I dimly remember the 'Straw Works.' The big workroom was on the lower floor of the Atlantic Hall, a building standing on the little rise of land on Main Street where now are the Lawrence and Swain houses. This building before my time was a Quaker Meeting House, standing on the corner of Main and Pleasant Streets. The straw works slipped out of sight, and this big room was used for a machine shop. In the great upper hall we had our dancing-school; and by that time we had outgrown our first teacher and now danced under the direction of a man who used to come from Hyannis every week through the winter months, unless the weather prevented the boat's going. Since we had no telegraphic communication at that time, there was always an uncertainty about the consummation of our plans that added a pleasing, or, at times, distinctly unpleasing excitement to life. I recall the smell of coal gas from the freshly and hastily made furnace fire, and I do not remember ever having seen a window open. Occasionally some of the older sisters would come and dance, if a big brother happened to come home for a few days, or a fiancé should drop down for a short stay. Brother came once, and though he liked my new dress, a bright red, plaided with lines of black and white, and trimmed with white fur with black tips — he

told Mother that he thought my gown a little short for such a big girl. I wear my gowns even shorter now, though I no longer go to dancing-school.

One industry introduced during these late years of the 'Old Nantucket' — that of making linen dusters — ran successfully for a long time and if it did little toward 'keeping the young people at home,' it furnished occupation for countless women who had no desire to leave home, or if they did, were kept here by circumstances 'over which they had no control,' as our Quaker school teacher used to say with that great full voice of hers, always making me, at least, feel that she had just come from an interview with the Creator Himself. I think very likely she had, for she was a sincere and consistent Friend. I can remember the sound of sewing machines at open windows all over the town, and the differing degrees of nervousness shown by the whirring of the wheels. It was said that one year fifty thousand of these dismal garments were made on Nantucket. Happily for the world this fashion languished and died at last.

Then an off-islander started a shoe factory. The building soon got on fire and burned, and the energetic young man married one of our classmates in the high school and took her away, so that venture netted nothing for Nantucket.

Pleasant Street, with very few exceptions, was a church-going neighborhood, mostly Unitarians. Our family never missed a service. Our seat was near the Macy pew, and one day Mrs. Macy said to Mother that she wished that Fanny sat as still and paid as close attention to the sermon as her daughter did. But as I had previously informed Mother that in his morning sermon, Mr. Dawes had said 'the' one hundred and forty-four times, Mother felt that no credit was due to either of us.

The Cap'ns' Room was the prominent clubhouse of the town. Stepfather had been one of the original purchasers of the Rotch Building, in which they organized the Pacific Club. The early membership consisted of captains who had doubled Cape Horn and cruised in the Pacific Ocean.

And now that the salt has all gone except for one retired square-rigger captain whom I remember as a very little boy, the name 'Pacific Club' is once more in use among the landsmen who make up its present membership. All through my lifetime it was referred to generally as the 'Cap'ns' Room'; and in the families of the members, more briefly, as 'The Room.'

There was another clubroom near where the captains gathered, frequented by the shipowners, and for many years the two clubs were known respectively as the House of Lords and the House

of Commons. The House of Lords was finally reduced to such a small number that it was decided to discontinue the club, and the remaining members cheerfully joined The Room — whose President for many years, perhaps the town's 'most important citizen,' who had been since the Civil War a political opponent of some of the Lords, had now died, so the affiliation of the new members, in some cases already old friends, was easily accomplished and 'without bloodshed.'

The captains were not in the habit of talking about themselves or their special part in the experiences of their voyages. I remember Stepfather's embarrassment during an 'interview' for which he had promised to return an hour earlier than usual from The Room. When he came into the house, the lady was already established in the parlor, with a little mahogany table drawn up in front of her, on whose polished top lay an amazing array of quires of paper and pencils, and a penknife and rubber.

Stepfather, always courteous, chivalrous to women, did his best to answer her questions, all of which he said afterwards seemed to him 'leaders.' Her inquiries covered so much ground, as well as water, that it was difficult to keep the connection. As for why she wanted to know certain details, he soon gave up trying to find out. It had never seemed to him worthy of remark, or even of remembering, that owing to some family

catastrophe, he, at eleven years of age, was earning his living, and helping his mother with the care and support of two younger children.

Visitors were always welcomed cordially at the Pacific Club at least once. They were promptly sized up, and in very rare instances were not encouraged to make the Room a loafing-place.

Among the homecomers sure of a hearty greeting from the captains were our two Admirals, known to the Cap'ns' Room as George and Seth. Admiral Coffin was the elder. Both were able men, upright, handsome, and with great charm of manner, and all Nantucket regarded them with pride and affection.

Sometimes an unexpected meeting took place in The Room after perhaps a period of years, for visitors came from many parts of the world. One evening an English naval officer appeared. I do not know why he came to Nantucket, nor who introduced him, but I remember the incident. He told a story of being up in the Arctic many years before, and said that one day several of his young officers were out in a small boat, when suddenly a squall came up and the boat capsized. They were a long distance from their own ship and their getting safely back seemed impossible. But a Nantucket whaleship at once lowered a boat, and all the Englishmen were saved. This officer did not know the name of the

ship, nor of the captain, and he had always hoped to find the man to whom they were so greatly indebted.

Thereupon Captain Grant said, with the customary casual manner of the captain, as if he mentioned the wind or the temperature, 'Why, that was my ship. I recollect. Somebody on board happened to see your men capsize so we lowered a boat.' A mere incident apparently, that might happen any time. But to the visiting officer it was a matter of some moment to have found the man he had so long wanted to meet.

Like men in all walks in life, the captains differed greatly as to degrees of intelligence, education, and ability, as well as in character and personality. As a rule they were dignified, affable, chivalrous, and ready with a helping hand for any need. They had been trained to stand by in any one's distress.

And now comes into my mind the merest whiff of a memory of being busy with my dolls while several people were present, and Father was speaking of some Nantucket man who had died somewhere at sea where there were islands, for all at once I heard, 'Oh, yes. He was buried on the island.' And again, 'Oh, yes, the grave is marked. I made the headboard myself, and carved the inscription, and set it with my own hands.'

That was all, but it some way hurt me a little, for it seemed that some little girl's father was

alone on an island in the great ocean — like Nantucket — and nobody knew where he was but my father. That is one of the countless little incidents that come unbidden into or from my mind at intervals, and for some unexplainable reason.

I remember more clearly one of Mother's stories of the death of a Nantucket captain around on the West Coast where Father's ship happened to be in port, and how Father immediately took charge of the captain's widow and little boy left stranded in that strange land. Father raised a sum of money, contributing generously at first, and also at the last, and he then got a passage home for the mother and boy. The son made good and Nantucket still speaks of him with the greatest pride, though it is many years since we have seen his radiant smile as we exchanged greetings. 'As if we were the people he most wanted to see,' I once said to his wife. 'That's the way he feels towards every Nantucketer,' she replied.

Another story of Mother's that was told always with glee was of Father's happening to find in a Pacific port some superior provisions. I remember that among them were hams, tongues, and prunes and other dried fruits. So Father joyously stocked up for the cabin table. Soon afterwards he fell in with a Nantucket ship and according to the custom of whalers, they lay to

for a gam. The captain came aboard Father's ship for dinner, and the fresh purchases were ordered for the meal. Under the circumstances it was almost a banquet, and the visitor, as our Susan would have said, 'manifested it.' He remarked that his wife had come out with him, that she now was ill on board his ship and she had no appetite. That was enough for Father. He at once had a generous lot of these choice provisions packed for the captain to take back to his wife and the visit ended with satisfaction all around.

Some weeks after that Father fell in with another Nantucket ship, and this time he was the dinner guest. He was greatly surprised at the extent and excellence of the repast, and remarked upon the unusual quality of the various articles. The captain-host explained that he had been lucky enough to meet the ship, whose name I don't know, and her captain had offered to sell him a part of a stock of provisions he had been lucky enough to procure for himself! Father's remarks when he heard the name of the ship and her captain were no part of the story as it was told to me. Probably they were of the nature of a brief character sketch.

A much briefer summing up appears on the first page of an old log-book in Father's handwriting. He must have been first mate at the time, because that officer usually kept the log.

The first entry — or caption, rather — consists of the name of the ship and of her captain, and the date of sailing from the given port. This captain's Christian name was William. Father had drawn his pen through *William*, and had written above, the word *Villain*.

Once retired from seafaring the captains readily took up the duties of citizenship, attending town meetings regularly, taking some interest in politics, local and national, often serving the town in some official capacity, as collector of the port, member of the school committee, registrar of deeds, judge of probate, and as trustee of the various organizations of the town.

They were generally church-goers, and very regular about it too. They were often on the governing board, vestry or board of trustees. They were seldom critical of the clergy or of the way things were managed in the parish. They were, however, very impatient with what seemed to be insincerity or hypocrisy.

There was one retired sea captain who was looked upon as a strong pillar of the church to which he belonged. He was supposed to be truly a saintly person. One day he was spoken of with great reverence in the presence of another captain who had in his youth sailed a voyage with the saint. The younger captain shook his head at the words 'true saint.' 'Well,' he admitted

doubtfully, 'he may be a good saint on shore, but he was the very devil of a captain on shipboard!'

This two-sided captain wore a wig. One day out after a whale, the great creature dove and suddenly came up under the boat, and in a second the men were struggling in the water. As they came to the surface a recent Portuguese recruit found himself face to face with the captain whose wet, bald pate glistened in the sun. The astonished Azorean gasped, 'God-dam whale knock all Cap'n's hairs off his head!' No expression of sympathy from any other man has been recorded.

And the women, what of them? It was no light test for a wife to be left at home, perhaps with small children, for two or three or four years. As Daniel Henderson puts it

> 'This is the isle where women mated
> And gave their men to the deep and waited,
> Bearing their babes alone,
> And by the bleak hearthstone
> Battling the awful dread
> Interminable absence bred.'

There was in many cases little ready money and so it was customary for the women to 'take up' at the grocery and dry-goods stores until the ship returned, and the voyage settled up, each man receiving his due proportion of the profit. This might or might not be sufficient to pay the

bills. It was all a part of the great gamble. Each one took his chance.

One of my early recollections is of a certain captain who had come home at about the time Father did, and one day came to see Father. He wouldn't come into the house, but the two men after wandering about a little sat down on a bench in the yard. Presently the visitor broke down and sobbed piteously, a grown man! It was horrible. Long afterwards Mother told me that it was one of the cases where the young wife, left to herself for the four or five years of the voyage, had let herself go, and lived so extravagantly that the proceeds of the voyage were not sufficient to pay the accumulation of bills, and the poor fellow was to try to find a ship and go to sea again as soon as possible without the one or two years' stay on shore to which the five-year captains looked forward with such longing.

Professionals as well as business men were involved in the huge gamble of the sea. There is one doctor's bill in the Historical Museum, which apparently ran for more than one voyage, since it is for 'attendance and medicines administered to the family' of the debtor, from July 8, 1808, to November 30, 1814. The amount is $11.78. And another 'to medicine and attendance for wife and family' from November 3, 1806 to December 31, 1822, amount $19.97.

When the bill at the dry-goods store was

promptly settled after the voyage, the merchant used to make a present to the wife or mother of the debtor. Sometimes it was a length of silk for a gown, sometimes a handsome shawl. Whether this act of courtesy had been provided for in the final account I do not know, but it seems a gracious acknowledgment from a creditor.

Among our friends and acquaintances there were several women who had made one or more voyages with their husbands, both whaling and merchant voyages. The first woman of Nantucket to go whaling was the wife of Captain Charles Grant, who sailed the greatest number of miles and made the most money of any of the Nantucket captains. On his second voyage after his marriage he sailed as commander of the ship, and on the next voyage his wife insisted upon his 'shipping' her. His ship, the Potomac, was one of those to go out over the bar on the Marine Camels.

Mrs. Grant's adventures were many and varied. Her three children were all born at sea, the first one on Pitcairn's Island. The youngest child, who is now living in Nantucket, went whaling with another captain in his youth, and had the unique experience of meeting his father and mother 'at sea.' His daughter says that her father remembers at Pitcairn's Island two supposed descendants of the mutineers of the Bounty, Aunt Peggy Christian and Aunt Je-

mima Young. I remember well Mrs. Charles Grant's cheery manner and bright dark eyes, undimmed to the very last, and her deep rich voice that so many Nantucket women used to have. Some of them have it still.

Captain Grant was one of Stepfather's great chums, gentle and courteous in manner, immaculate in dress. According to his granddaughter, he was, on his father's side, of Scotch ancestry, but his mother was a direct descendant of Tristram Coffin, so he was after all one of Nantucket's 'own,' though his father's arrival in Scotch Highland costume must have been somewhat of a shock to the Quaker inhabitants. But since his coming to the Island seems to have been unpremeditated, as he was cast ashore from a wreck off Nantucket, probably his strange attire was forgiven.

Mrs. Noyes, who used to keep a small dry-goods store on Center Street, between the Swain girls and Mary F., told me that when she went whaling she used, in pleasant weather, to take her work basket and mount into one of the whaleboats swinging from the davits and spend a long morning comfortably sewing, while her two children on long leashes, fastened within reach of her hand, would play as unconcernedly about the deck as if they were in their own back yard on Hussey Street.

To take one's work, sewing or knitting, in the

oval Fayal basket with a cover and go to spend the day with a friend, was no uncommon thing among the Nantucketers. But it was not given to many of the women to do the same thing in the Pacific Ocean. And I know a gray-haired man who went whaling as a little boy, and who left his father's ship one morning and went with his mother to spend the day on another ship that had stopped for a gam in mid-ocean. The wife and daughter of the captain were on board; and the little girl, wonder of wonders, had a tiny iron stove, a truly stove, in which a truly coal fire could be built, and the two children on that white-starred day 'at sea' made orange marmalade on the truly stove! And is it any wonder that orange marmalade has forever to this grown-up man the fragrance of nectar and the flavor of ambrosia, that are not advertised on the label, nor even recognized in the home-kitchen product!

Fortunately Mrs. Brock and her little girl were prevented from going on the first voyage planned for them, otherwise we should not have had the daughter's precious story of their doubling Cape Horn. And this is the way it happened, that they didn't go.

Captain Brock's ship was being fitted out in Boston for the voyage around the Horn. He was waiting to hear from the owners. Everything at the Nantucket end was in readiness.

The housekeeping had been broken up, the furniture stored, for on this voyage he was to take his wife and little girl, and they were now staying with the grandparents until they should be summoned. Every loose end had been tied. They could start at a moment's notice, the captain and his family; and his friend, Captain Folger, who had settled in California, and being obliged to come east on business, was anxious to get back to his family in San Francisco. No easy journey in those days!

It was winter at Nantucket. The captains were anxious to get away while the sound was clear of ice. It grew cold. Then the wind came in to the northwest. The ice made out from the shores. The docks were frozen. The wind drove down great fields of ice from along the north coast. The harbor was completely frozen, the narrow entrance between Brant Point and Coatue was closed with a wall of ice grounded on the bottom, like a stone wall.

The chord of the bay filled up. Still the northwest wind blew; still the ice whitened to the very horizon on the north and west of the Island. Nothing like it had ever been known. On the south and east there was the ice as far as one could see, but there were narrow streaks here and there of blue water. The ice was broken and moving, not packed solid as on the other side of the Island. But vessels seldom passed that

way. The two captains watched day after day, the weather vanes steady, the white ice at the north, unbroken, motionless, solid for miles from the shore. Nothing could free those imprisoned men but a southerly wind, unless some vessel could be sighted off the south side, near enough to be reached by a small boat.

Then on a fair day, a vessel was seen making her way along, opposite Quidnet. Slowly she worked through the narrow channels of open water, slowly she neared the shore, until it was possible to signal to her. In some way it was understood by those on board that they were to go around and wait off 'Sconset for passengers.

For days more the men waited. The weather vanes were motionless. The vessel worked her passage with difficulty up and down off 'Sconset where a certain man lived who had promised to take the two captains in his dory when the wind changed, and land them on the vessel — if they reached her.

And then one night at dusk, a vane was seen by Captain Folger to move a little. He watched steadily, and in the evening he came to call Captain Brock, to say that the wind was hauling to the southwest, that they'd better get to 'Sconset, and if it should be southwest at daylight they'd try to get off. But not if the wind didn't change — southwest, or no venture.

There was no question now of wife and little

girl. He must leave them. The final preparations were soon under way. Captain William Baxter agreed to take Captain Brock to 'Sconset. The little girl remembers the tragic leave-taking at midnight, and then her father had gone, out into the cold and darkness.

Captain Brock arrived in 'Sconset before Captain Folger. The one conspicuous weather vane in the village had swung back doggedly to the northwest. There was no time to be lost. Captain Folger might arrive at any moment. Captain Brock was a slight man, but wiry and active. He found an old nail or two and then without hesitation he swung himself to the low roof of the barn, clambering like a squirrel to the ridge pole, climbed to the vane, clinging with knees and one arm, and with the other hand he turned the head of the vane to the southwest, inserted the nails firmly in the socket, so that a living gale would not cause a change of wind so far as that vane might indicate. He slipped down more quickly than he had ascended and was able to meet Captain Folger when he appeared, and to rejoice with him that the wind was favorable!

The fisherman was all ready for them, and with some difficulty the boat — probably a dory — was launched and got through the surf without being batted to pieces by the blocks of ice hurled at it by the waves.

After a tortuous journey, however, they reached the vessel. The two men were taken aboard; the vessel headed for Chatham on Cape Cod. They nearly lost their lives getting ashore on the treacherous ice, but no time could be lost by Captain Brock in putting himself into communication with the shipowners in Boston. So he drove several miles in the bitter cold to the nearest telegraph station. He found that, hopeless of hearing from him, the owners had engaged another captain and the ship was to sail the very next day. However, they agreed to wait for Captain Brock, who got to Boston as soon as possible. He wrote to his wife before he sailed; but the freeze-up was the longest ever known, and when Mrs. Brock finally got that letter telling of her husband's safe arrival on the mainland, it was afterwards found by calculation that his ship was already below the Line.

Is it any wonder that the women of Nantucket in those days preferred their houses built so close to each other that they almost touched elbows? Or that women of all ages, who had husbands or sons on the same ship, would go with their knitting and sit long hours together to 'sympa' with each other?

One of the leading women of Nantucket was born, I am told, at sea, and when on the occasion of her marriage, the usual data were required, her place of birth was entered in terms of latitude

and longitude. A detail not given to the official questioner is that the ship being overdue or the baby's arrival premature, her first bathtub was a lovely Chinese punch bowl, hastily procured from a crate of the cargo.

Sometimes the women who stayed at home took care that as little as possible of the proceeds of the voyage should be diverted to the payment of bills. And in one instance, where there were no children to take the time and energy of the lonely woman, when the husband asked for the bills, Aunt Sally said, 'There are none. I have made shirts enough for my support.' We wondered what Uncle Robert said besides the historic 'Why, Sally!'

And then when a ship arrived, there would be the brief notice in the local paper 'Returned letters. Call at J. B. Macy's, Straight Wharf.' And that meant that the ship carrying out those letters two or perhaps three years ago, had never happened to fall in with the ships to which they were addressed, 'Pacific Ocean, Anywhere.'

The Island women waiting, one, two, three years. The Island sailor waiting, one, two, three years.

Susie's grandfather, Andrew Brock, hadn't heard from home for many months. Standing on deck as his ship neared the Nantucket bar after a successful voyage, he watched a fishing boat coming around Brant Point. As she passed

close, she hailed the whaler. And to the query from on board, 'What's the news from town?' the answer came clearly — 'Andrew Brock's wife died this morning.'

We grew up with one captain who sailed neither a whaler nor a merchantman, and that was Captain Manter of the old steamer, Island Home, that was running from our earliest memory to late in the nineties.

She took away our brides, she brought back the Islanders who wanted most of all to come home for their last long sleep. She brought the war news and the news of peace, she went wrecking, or she endured the bombardment of ice-cakes until they closed around her and held her motionless. With Captain Manter and the Island Home we might have been willing to start across the Atlantic. Our faith in them both was perfect. They were a grand pair; and his portrait and her gold eagles are among the prized possessions of the Historical Association.

Ah, the captains!

'. . . undulled is the fame of their long toil,
And never was their zeal abated by any counting of the cost.'

And the women? Why, they bore the men; and then bore with them!

CHAPTER XVI

LATTER DAYS

By the time the Spanish War came on I had arrived at the age spoken of as 'no longer young.' That meant that my contemporaries were married or pursuing some other career. The few of us who had not felt called to the profession of matrimony or any more clearly defined profession, were regarded as out of the running. The *why* was guessed at, wondered at, fictionized, but our futures were no longer of vital interest to anybody.

Some of us were apparently regarded as overflowing founts of energy, mental, moral, and physical, and 'having nothing to do,' were therefore on tap for any one who needed help in any direction, or who had any sort of odd job to be handed on to any one who would take it! Our unrecognized 'profession' of 'only daughter,' or the 'unmarried daughter,' in its contacts with men, women, children and things, has always seemed to me to equal, if not surpass, in extent and variety, the experience of most 'marrieds' and of the other professionals of our set, or even of our acquaintance.

We were members of many social and intellectual clubs in town, the Shakespeare Club being

our favorite. We even had a little musical club. There was some church work, though in the Unitarian Church which most of 'those remaining' attended there wasn't much to do except the flowers, unless one taught in Sunday School. I did that for many years, and acted as Superintendent when Mrs. Katherine was away. My own visiting off-island was less frequent. I had become more exacting as a guest, and I accepted few of the invitations still given me. I was quite contented. There were still delightful and congenial people enough to constitute a satisfactory sort of society. I was rather too busy. Then the Spanish War suddenly claimed our time and attention. And I was some way, I don't know how, at once secretary of some organization; and while we did our work the war news was cried through the streets by faithful Billy Clark every afternoon when the boat came in.

The war work went on steadily until at last no more was required, no more meetings were held, no more reports written and reluctantly read in church or public halls. The war was over, and Nantucket resumed, with thankfulness unspeakable, its normal quiet life.

The years slipped away with their changing seasons of joy and sorrow, gain and loss. Stepfather died. Mother died. Brother, in order to live at all, was living in California. His two sons had finished their course at Exeter and at Har-

vard University. The younger one was at the Harvard Law School. Our Christmas vacations together were drawing to a close. My House and I would soon be left to cherish each other, and to whisper sometimes 'Don't you remember?'

So the World War found me, having passed the time of being 'no longer young' and advanced to the class referred to as 'still young.' And that meant that our interests were still in 'current events,' that we were still presentable, and even desirable, in 'society,' and that still there was a chance for us to fulfill those prophecies and expectations on the part of our friends which we had so woefully disappointed. There were now eligible widowers! My nephew left the Law School and after training, went over to France. His brother for good reasons was kept (I believe providentially) in California. So, being 'still young,' I went with my contemporaries, predecessors, and successors, first to the Old Quaker Meeting House, lent the Red Cross by the Historical Association. Then we moved to rooms on the corner of Main and Orange Streets, and finally settled in the big King house on Union Street. Here we worked faithfully, day after day, cut and folded, sewed and packed, held meetings, took part in parades through the streets of the town in our uniforms, wrote thrift-stamp jingles for the local paper, gathered barrels of all sorts of junk, wore scratchy little brass breastpins, and

breathed with difficulty under the indefinable weight of woe that bore us down. We often smiled, we even tried to laugh, as we stood in a long line at some grocer's on days when sugar was distributed, a pound to a customer. As I didn't use it in tea or coffee I was able to make little presents to my friends, especially to the young women of the Candlelight Guild of our church, most of whom had small children.

One evening after what had seemed to me a long day, a friend came to me and asked, 'Were you sitting in Wing's big window this afternoon in your uniform, with some other women, making bandages and things?'

'I was,' I answered.

'Well,' she said, 'I heard it, but I couldn't believe it!' You see, I had either developed or deteriorated, as you like, since the 'no longer young' days, when bicycles had come in and on one occasion an anxious caller had asked if I had been riding 'one of those wheels.' I had not. 'Well,' said this friend — really she was that — 'I *said* if Mollie Starbuck had been riding a bicycle, I should never have faith in women again!'

We also attended a class in general nursing, taught by a wonderful nurse who was living in Nantucket and helping our doctor to bring back to life a patient sent down to the Island to die. We met in the library of the Coffin School on

certain afternoons of the week. We learned much besides nursing from that splendid woman.

Then I received a telegram announcing the sudden death of my brother in California. It was August.

Three months later came the Armistice. I woke to the clamor of bells, and soon after I was dressed, and had found by telephone that it was true, I heard the sound of shots. I happened to be upstairs in a front room, and looking out I saw Tom, the only remaining member of the Macy family, who had come from New York and was living alone, like me, in his old home across the street.

Tom seemed to be fully dressed, but his left hand clutched his coat collar close to his throat as if his toilet had been hurried as to details. He stood alone in the middle of the street, seemingly the only person alive except myself. In his right hand he held a pistol pointing heavenward, and looking straight ahead with a perfectly serious expression, he was firing shot after shot into the air.

I turned back and seized a motor-boat whistle, bought for use in an emergency that had never occurred. Here was the moment. So like Barbara Frietchie, I leaned far out on the window sill and boomed a note that might have been heard across the Island. Tom looked up, his expression changed, but that was all, and I shouted,

'There's life still left in the old street, Tom!' And so the duet continued until Tom's cartridges gave out, and the street was becoming populous.

I withdrew from the window, flung myself down, and wept heartbrokenly that Brother couldn't have lived to see this day. He, like many men of his age, was as truly a victim of the World War as those who went overseas and now sleep under white crosses in France.

But there were many matters to be attended to, and later on that day I was once more in my uniform marching through the streets of the town, band playing and flags flying; glad at nightfall to be physically tired after the day of excitement and emotion, and to be once more at home.

Nantucket, without quite losing consciousness, has experienced a complete reincarnation, and yet has retained her identity. It must be a curious feeling if it is realized! The Nantucket of history, it is true, is no longer a fact; it is only a memory. But Nantucket's brain is still active, her soul still lives. Her personality is still attractive, her sense of power not wholly gone. She quietly welcomes all who come to her, for rest, for play, for the satisfaction of curiosity, listening with her 'Smile of Wisdom' to all their comments on her little ways, sometimes amused, sometimes wincing a bit when they push irreverently into

CALM ON THE HARBOR

her sacred places; and taking to her heart the loyal and true who are of her spiritual kin.

Content with the part she has played in her country's history she peacefully rests in the node of the great tide-curve that makes from the Bahamas to the Bay of Fundy. From the Radio Compass Station on the south shore she sends signals and warnings and correct bearings to the vessels that pass up and down, skirting the overlapping shoals, when the stars are blotted out by impenetrable fog, and nothing is certain but the rush of unseen breakers, and the danger that lies in wait for the wrong turn of the wheel or a mistaken light. And in the event of unavoidable disaster, she is ready with her efficient help. God bless her, our Nantucket!

THE END